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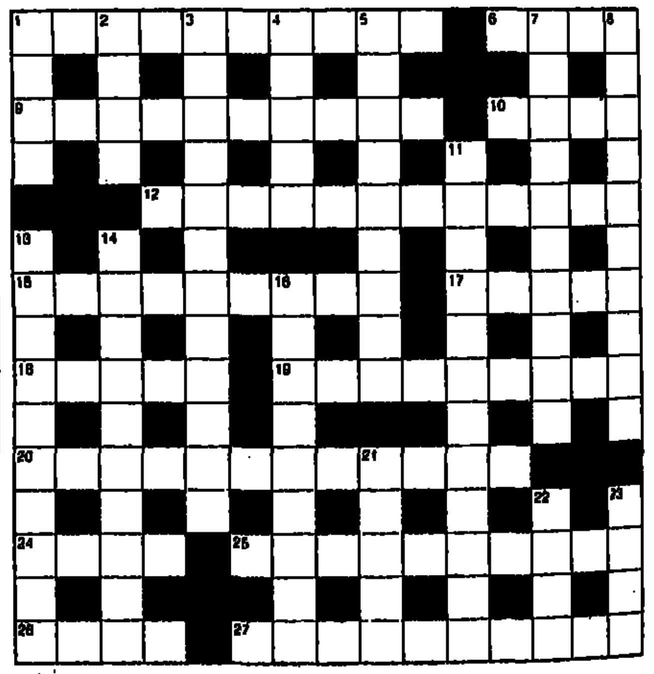


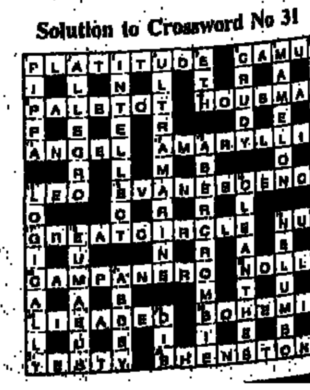
Across

1 Sir Jasper's wife, a female fiddler (4,6)
6 Richardson's *Pamela* contains canned nourishment. (4)
9 Noble with whom Aminta coupled, titularly. (4,6)
10 Form of address in Gilbert's ballad is acceptable socially. (4)
12 Keats's hill-top activity. (6,6)
15 Jews unsettle shaken Pakistani dictator. (9)
17 Novelist who gave Russia its last tsarina. (5)
18 Lord Dacre does take in Iago's personal statement. (5)
19 Mlle is ready for the ritual, but it's past. (9)
20 "The idiot who praises with ——— tone, / All centuries but this . . ." (Gilbert). (12)
24 Waterproofs for Yellowstone? (4)
25 Fight point in dispute — betwixt Yorke and Lancaster? (10)
26 The French notice backward god. (4)
27 Activity by which Paula captivated poor Stancy's MIG. (10)

Down

1 Composer who is doubly the Italian article. (4)
2 Painter who covers only a quarter of the scale? (4)
3 Scottish knight whose forehead surely bore horns. (5-2-5)
4 The wanderer is taken back by his faithful friend. (5)
5 Mme Schumann-Heink sums up Jack Worthing in a note. (9)
7 It's illusory to confuse Satan with a chimp. (10)
8 American who cursed five sovereigns and Cranford's lord. (10)
11 Stewart pretender and Simnel, each in disguised form. (7,5)
13 Uneasy manner of French, left by loch. (10)
14 Stack hovel around the man from St Petersburg – as he used to be. (10)
16 Nonsense verse – it's pretty bloody all round. (9)
21 Deputized for the Cloth? (5)
22 Operatic heroine keeps announcing herself backwards. (4)
23 A burden we bear, apparently. (4)

Solution to Crossword No 31



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AMERICA

TLS

The Times Literary Supplement

FRIDAY 24 MAY 1985 No 4,286 70p

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The story as revised

Alan Brinkley

HUGH BROGAN
Longman History of the United States of America
740pp. Longman. £19.95.
0 582 35385 8

It has been twenty years since Samuel Eliot Morison published his elegant, highly acclaimed *Oxford History of the American People*. And it is perhaps no accident that there has not been a comparably successful narrative history of the United States since. In the early 1960s, when Morison was writing, it was still feasible to believe that all the many, diverse findings of American historical scholarship could be made to fit together into a single, coherent synthesis. But it did not remain possible to believe that for long. Before the end of the decade, two broad developments – one within society at large, the other within the historical profession itself – had changed dramatically the way Americans looked at themselves and their past. In the light of those changes, the clear flowing narrative that Morison so effectively produced no longer seemed appropriate or even possible.

The narrative was a victim, first, of the social and political crisis that rocked American society beginning in the mid-1960s. The turbulence of those years destroyed, among other things, the illusion of homogeneity that Americans had once fervently embraced. It reduced confidence in American institutions, and it challenged Americans' assumptions about their own innocence and virtue. Not surprisingly, perhaps, historians experiencing this instability and national self-doubt began to see in the American past the same failings and divisions that they could see in the present. To many, the traditional, heroic synthesis suddenly seemed inadequate; to some, it appeared fraudulent, even dangerous.

But the historical narrative was ultimately less a casualty of the politics of the 1960s than of the new ways in which historians were doing their work and of the "new histories" they were producing: studies of the experiences of women, blacks, ethnic groups, Indians, workers, and others formerly relegated to the margins of historical scholarship; community studies, examining the social fabrics of discrete places; quantitative studies, which challenged the validity of the sorts of literary sources from which the traditional narrative had been largely constructed. This "revolution" in scholarship (much of it, of course, a response to the political events of the time, but much of it also a response to the more or less autonomous discovery of new methods of inquiry) has been widely and appropriately praised for bringing to our attention important and unexplored areas of the past. But it has also, as scholars are beginning to realize, divided the profession into a series of rival, at times warring, camps; and it has turned a story that once seemed impressively coherent into a complex, fragmented mosaic whose parts at times it seems impossible to put back together.

Calls for a "new synthesis" have been echoing throughout the scholarly world for several years now, but so far, at least, no one appears to have discovered how to produce one. It has not, however, been entirely for lack of trying. There is, for example, Page Smith's *People's History of the United States*, a work of grotesque dimensions (6 volumes, 6,000 pages so far, with no end yet in sight), but one that, despite its considerable literary appeal, escapes only fitfully from the conventional political-diplomatic-military narrative. There is James MacGregor Burns's *The American Experiment* (of which one volume has appeared), a much braver effort to incorporate the findings of the new social historians into the story, but one that suffers from a strained and fragmented quality which drains the narrative of any real coherence. And there are the innumerable textbooks, aimed at high-school and university students, which are designed less to synthesize than to compile, in vaguely palatable form, an enormous potpourri of information capable of serving the needs of as many different instructors as possible.

Hugh Brogan's ambitious and impressive contribution to the genre is different. It marks the first serious effort since Morison's to produce a single-volume history of the United States for a popular audience. And although it is not in most respects what the scholarly proponents of a "new synthesis" have been clamouring for, it is, on its own terms, a significant accomplishment.

Morris Engel's "Rebecca, Harlem, New York", 1947, from the exhibition American Images: Photography 1945–1980, *details of which will be found on page 566, opposite.*

Its similarities to Morison's 1965 volume are evident from the start (not least in the book's title) and are probably not unintended. Like Morison, Brogan has written an idiosyncratic book, emphasizing those aspects of the past that are of most interest to him. Like Morison, he has invested his narrative with a highly personal tone. And like Morison, he has written an extraordinarily eloquent and engaging book, graced by liveliness, by wit, and occasionally by passion. But for all the similarities between the two books, it is the differences that are the more striking. Perhaps the most conspicuous change is one of tone. Morison's narrative, although somewhat less exuberant than earlier such works, nevertheless retained much of the heroic enthusiasm with which Americans prior to the 1960s generally viewed their past. Brogan is more restrained. He writes with the sort of wry understatement that Americans tend to associate with English intellectuals; and he brings to his story not only his very real affection for the United States, but a detachment and a scepticism that an American writer might find elusive. Yet Brogan's reticence, one suspects, is more than a reflection of his British perspective; it is a reflection as well of how the events of the last twenty years have affected the way domestic and foreign observers alike look at the American past.

In 1965, for example, Morison could write of how white Americans treated the Indian population in the nineteenth century with a tone of mild regret for the cruelties of the policies, but also with a resigned acceptance of the inevitability and, ultimately, of the desirability of the process: "Looking backward, it is now evident that, in view of the irresistible push of the westward movement, Indian removal was the lesser evil. It had to be, but the process was carried out with unnecessary hardship to the victims." Brogan, by contrast, minces no words. He introduces a moving and powerful account of the dispersal of the tribes with a blunt evaluation: "Genocide is an unpleasant word, but it seems appropriate here." Morison's account of America's reckless industrial expansion in the late nineteenth century is at heart an optimistic one: "For all the corruption and pitiful politics of the Gilded Age, it was a robust, fearless, generous era, full of gusto and joy of living." Brogan expresses considerably more dismay: "America had changed, was still changing, was moving into ever stranger waters. The fact spread a deepening malaise ever more widely in the national consciousness as the nineteenth century wore to its end." Morison depicts the 1920s as an era in which economic progress and popular enthusiasm counterbalanced bigotry and reaction; Brogan describes the same events in a chapter entitled, bluntly, "Irresponsibility".

But it is in his interpretation of some of the

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central episodes of American history, more than in the general tone of his book, that Brogan most decisively reveals the effects of the last two decades on perceptions of the past. Where Morison, for example, discussed Reconstruction after the Civil War largely in terms of its effects on the region's white population and decried the "forces of hate and vengeance" that he believed shaped the experience, Brogan accepts wholeheartedly the new, "revisionist" view of the era: that the Reconstruction experiment failed not because it was too radical and vindictive, but because it was not radical enough; not because of the excesses of the North, but because of the racism and oppressiveness of the South, which consigned freed blacks to generations of injustice and subjugation. "Reconstruction", he remarks, "failed to save the South from herself, and the Afro-American from the South." Morison's description of slavery as a generally benign (if morally objectionable) institution offers vague echoes of the "happy with their lot" view of early twentieth-century historiography. Brogan describes the institution (with far more sensitivity to new racial norms) as "a regime of sorrow, of degradation, of unremitting toil, dreadful personal insecurity and perpetual frustration". If anything redeemed the slave experience, it was not the beneficence of white masters, but the ability of blacks themselves to retain "their self-respect, fragments of their ancestral culture, memories of their origins".

Brogan's extended discussion of the American Revolution displays particularly marked differences from Morison's and other traditional accounts. In discussing American motivations, he relies largely on the now somewhat dated economic arguments of "progressive" historians of the 1920s and 1930s and emphasizes the effects of British trade policies on American merchants. But it is the British side of the conflict that most engages him (as the title of his chapter on the coming of the Revolution – "The Road to Ruin" – suggests). And in discussing that, Brogan offers a vivid and fascinating picture of the stumbling, incoherent, self-defeating policies that a succession of incompetent English governments inflicted on the colonies and on themselves. This is not the old story of heroic American resistance to oppression; it is the more mundane (and more realistic) story of repeated miscalculations and escalating misperceptions on both sides of the Atlantic.

In discussing the more recent past, Brogan accepts a number of new interpretations that remain highly controversial. Morison, for example, produced a perfunctory account of the frenzy of domestic anti-communism after World War II focusing, as most early accounts did, almost exclusively on the excesses of Joe McCarthy. Brogan tells a tale of widespread social hysteria and harshly denounces the failure of responsible élites to act forcefully to stop it. Morison, unsurprisingly, described the origins of the Cold War in the orthodox, anti-communist terms that dominated public discourse in the pre-Vietnam era. Brogan, by contrast, views post-war American policy with considerable scepticism. He expresses profound reservations about Truman's decision to use the atomic bomb on Japan; he is critical of American diplomats for rejecting too soon the possibilities for accommodation with the Soviet Union; he is unrelentingly critical of American policies in the Third World, which led inevitably, he suggests, to the fiasco of Vietnam. (He is, evidently, unimpressed by recent efforts to rehabilitate the American intervention there.)

Brogan's narrative has, in short, responded in decisive ways to the past two decades of American life – at times effectively, at times, perhaps, too readily. In other senses, however, this remains a highly traditional book. Historians who have called most urgently in recent years for a return to narrative have been asking above all for a new approach to the past that can transcend the fragmentation and incoherence of the "new history", an approach that emphasizes not just the local and the particular, but the larger unities and continuities of the past. Brogan has not answered that call; indeed he has not really even tried to do so.

He has, to be sure, introduced some unifying elements to his story. "If this book has any one theme", he claims, "it is the continuity of American history." For the most part, however, what continuities he demonstrates are the traditional political and institutional ones; his claims for social and cultural continuity remain largely unsupported. He does occasionally touch on the slippery question of what constitutes the American "national character", but without great success. This was a popular area of inquiry thirty years ago. It has, however, become decidedly unfashionable in recent years and has been quietly abandoned by most contemporary historians as excessively subjective and imprecise. As if to confirm the difficulties, Brogan himself seems unable to put his heart into the effort and offers only occasional, fragmentary answers to the question he raises: "What is an American?"

Most conspicuously missing from this book, however, is evidence of the fruits of the "new history". These are, of course, the very findings that have so weakened the ability of scholars to construct a coherent narrative; but even those historians most fervently committed to developing a new synthesis have always insisted that there must be a place for the new history within it. In this volume, however, there is in fact far less social history than in Morison's work of twenty years ago (although Morison's social history was of the old school and consisted largely of broad subjective observations and anecdotes about popular culture). Brogan makes occasional gestures toward the new social history; and what he does, he does well. His description of seventeenth-century society is skimpy, but it embodies some of the important new findings of colonial social historians. His portrayal of slavery, although similarly brief, shows clearly the influence of the explosion of scholarship in that field. His discussion of the world of the immigrant in the late nineteenth century is exceptionally good, combining the virtues of a traditional narrative with some of the sophisticated insights of modern urban historians.

Those familiar with recent scholarship will be more struck, however, by how many things have been left out of this book altogether. Women are almost invisible. Blacks receive serious attention only in the traditional, "appropriate" places: the antebellum South and the 1960s. Workers merit little discussion beyond the conventional institutional histories of trade unions. The important (if often controversial) work of modernization theorists and "organizational" historians has apparently had no impact at all on Brogan's view of the twentieth century. A whole range of other issues that have become central to modern American historiography – ethnicity, mobility, class, electoral realignment, demographic change, regionalism, popular culture, bureaucratic behaviour – are similarly absent from the narrative. Only about a third of the books listed in Brogan's admittedly selective bibliography were published after 1965, only a small handful after 1970; and even these are not generally representative of the "new history" in any serious sense.

Brogan has not, therefore, succeeded in creating – in fact he has not really even tried to create – a genuinely new picture of American history. His narrative is, in the end, the old narrative, primarily political in focus, engaged largely with important public events and great men, generally unconcerned with the social and cultural issues that have preoccupied academic historians for a generation. Professional scholars will undoubtedly consider that a failing, as in some senses it certainly is. Most readers, however, will be less troubled by what is absent from this book than enchanted by what is in it. For this is a work whose strengths ultimately outweigh its limitations. Hugh Brogan may not have produced a new synthesis. But he has brought to the old one his own considerable eloquence, wit, erudition, and responsiveness to contemporary sensibilities. And he has, as a result, made the much-battered, oft-maligned traditional narrative seem to live again.

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Peter Marshall

DONALD B. COLE
Martin Van Buren and the American Political System
477pp. Guildford: Princeton University Press. £48.75.
0691047154

When, in 1948, Arthur M. Schlesinger asked scholars to list in order of merit past Presidents of the United States, Martin Van Buren occupied the middle of the table; he was the average of the average. Seven additional holders of the office and subsequent fluctuations of assessment would not significantly alter this rating. Donald B. Cole classes Van Buren with Buchanan and Nixon, neither of whom seems a candidate likely to secure recognition for exceptionally meritorious services to the nation. As a politician, however, his success and influence proved far more impressive, a process pursued indefatigably in this study.

Van Buren was the first American organizer of party: born in 1782, he could not claim, as has been claimed for Andrew Jackson, even the most juvenile role in the achievement of independence. If his ancestry was impeccably New York Dutch, his development was exclusively American. He learned his trade in the political conflicts leading up to the War of 1812, a period in which issues were more evident than organization, and were fought out by the great names of the Revolution. Van Buren, lacking in personal and political stature, could rely only on stratagem and manipulation, qualities that found expression in the creation and direction of party: his early Jeffersonian adherence led to his establishment in 1819 of the Bucktails, an anti-Clintonian grouping which, by 1823, dominated New York politics under the direction of the Albany Regency. The party caucus, the press, officers of the law, held together by the powers and prospects of patronage, represented an instrument of government unknown to, if feared by, a previous generation. For in so fashioning Van Buren could take credit or blame, the product of skills that would be used to secure the Presidency for Jackson and would prove inadequate only after his own entrance into the White House. For whatever his excellence as a politician, Van Buren lacked conviction as a national figure. His tactics depended upon the alignment of the Democrats of New York and of Virginia: his principles, when discernible, saw national unity as deriving from States rights, a matter for negotiation rather than for pronouncement.

Van Buren might well have aroused mistrust but was somewhat harder to dislike. Consumed by politics, he fought always to win but was wise enough to appreciate that victory could never be total. In his conflicts, however, larger issues of purpose and policy made only transitory appearances. Devotion to detail ensured his command of a political system he had largely brought into being, but would not provide a comparable control of the nation's economy: the Panic of 1837 proved that point.

Cole's study provides as much detail on the career of Van Buren as can conceivably be required and absorbed. Whether the "little Magician" or the "sly fox" offers a better description will remain a matter of opinion. In his later years he had exhausted his bag of tricks: as a manipulator he set a somewhat dubious example. Van Buren's shortcomings as President pointed the way not to national growth but to a Civil War which he lived to see. The political system he had done so much to develop showed itself, in its turn, unequal to the task of national unity. If its faults were fatal, their nature is not easily or briefly to be made clear. This account will add to an understanding of the origins and failings of national politics in the United States.

Four Hundred Years of Virginia, 1584–1984: An anthology, compiled by Dora Jean Ashe, presents brief selections from histories, biographies, novels and poems about Virginia and Virginians (221pp. Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America. $22.50; paperback $9.75. 0 8191 4482 7).

The libertarian lobby

O. R. McGregor

MARK LILLY
The National Council for Civil Liberties: The first fifty years
174pp. Macmillan. £17.50 (paperback, £5.95).
0333369742

The publication of a volume to celebrate the foundation some fifty years ago of the National Council for Civil Liberties merits a cheer from democrats or, perhaps, two cheers from those who recall that E. M. Forster was its first president. The Council was created by Ronald Kidd, who had failed as a bookseller and in half a dozen other occupations. But he discovered his vocation one evening in 1932 when, having followed a demonstration of hunger marchers, he saw two policemen acting as *agents provocateurs*, encouraging some of the crowd around them to attack the lines of police in Trafalgar Square. He conceived the idea of bringing together eminent people in order to form a permanent watch-dog body on behalf of civil liberties which would observe such events.

The inaugural meeting held early in 1934 was attended by some twenty people. Kidd became Secretary and remained the force behind the Council until his death in 1942. Its agreed aim was

> to assist in the maintenance of hard-won rights, especially freedom of speech, the press and assembly, from all infringements by executive or judicial authority contrary to the due process of law, or infringement by the tendency of governmental or other agencies to use their powers at the expense of the precarious liberties for which citizens of this country have fought.

The new organization soon gathered an impressive list of vice-presidents ranging from Clement Attlee to Rebecca West. A team of observers for the arrival of the next hunger march was quickly assembled; it included Claud Cockburn, Victor Gollancz, Harold Laski and H. G. Wells. Work for the Council flooded in as the 1930s crumbled into Hitler's war. The Blackshirts, demonstrations for and against Franco, an attempt by the Home Office to censor films being screened by private clubs and schools, opposition to the Incitement to Disaffection Bill and other similar causes kept it busy until the war began.

During the war, Britain remained a remarkably tolerant and decent society. Inevitably, there were instances of silliness and intolerance but nothing that could justify Mark Lilly's parade of such phrases as "the mania for enforcing conformity", "this climate of bigotry" and "public hysteria and petty suspicion".

Lilly's uncritical approval of the policies of the Communist Party during that period encourages little confidence in his judgments on the history of civil liberties at this time. For example, in the course of criticizing the BBC, he remarks that "the corporation was also antagonistic to the People's Convention Movement, which had been set up to engage with civil liberties issues (particularly as they affected the working class) by means of 'vigilance' committees operating in local districts". However, Lilly omits to explain that the People's Convention was established by the Communist Party early in 1941, ostensibly as an organization to agitate for better air raid shelters and social services, though in fact to promote the doctrine and tactic of revolutionary defeatism from which a revolutionary situation might be created. The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was a bombshell which required that all Communists should denounce and oppose the war as an imperialist conflict. The campaign of the People's Convention to bring about the collapse of the British war effort against Hitler, by persuading people that defeat was inevitable, was astonishingly well tolerated in the only country then fighting Nazi Germany. After Hitler attacked the Soviet Union, the Convention's supporters turned from defeatism to the demand for "a second front now".

Nor is what Lilly describes as "the post-war anti-communist hysteria" adequately treated. Indeed, it is hard to think of the National Council as other than a Communist front organization in this period. That is why George Orwell and E. M. Forster resigned their membership in 1948, the latter for reasons which Lilly finds "unconvincing". Of course, the Council took the lead in such admirable causes as the campaign against the Mental Deficiency Act of 1913 and secured the great improvements brought about by the 1959 Act which an earlier historian, Barry Cox, described as "the most impressive of the NCCL's achievements". In the recent past, the Council has dealt with such issues as the rights of homosexuals, the situation of women, the problems arising from immigration and race relations and the administration of justice generally, with a special concern for the nature and exercise of police powers.

The trouble is that Lilly provides little more than a briefly annotated catalogue of the Council's activities. He mentions but fails to analyse some of the central issues that such a body must face; in particular, he does not assess its contribution to the maintenance or extension of civil liberties in the half-century of its existence. In a country which prefers to judge these issues on their merits as they arise and which has little taste for applying general principles of liberty to them, it is difficult for a national body to act as a national leader in the defence of civil liberty. Moreover, many other groups defend or advance civil liberties in their own special fields. Lilly also notes, though he fails to explore, the dilemma which the Council has had to face from time to time during the past fifty years. Ought assistance to be given to secure the enjoyment of their rights to persons or organizations advancing ideas and policies that would result in the destruction of the freedom which the Council exists to preserve? In the days of the first Attlee Government, D. N. Pritt, a leading member of the Council and a famous silk who combined brilliant forensic talents with a slavish devotion to Stalinist principles and policies, urged legislation to forbid the advocacy of fascist ideas and rejected out of hand the liberal position which Ronald Kidd had adopted.

The same dispute rumbles on, as inevitably it will in a free country. It surfaced at the last annual general meeting of the Council, in what may be its last year of existence. Although Lilly provides little information about the Council's sources of income, it is dependent upon the GLC and trade unions for one-quarter of its funding. The present troubles, which led to the resignation of the recently appointed General Secretary, Larry Gostin, stemmed from conflict between his and his supporters' belief that the Council ought not to be used as a mere instrument of the left and that of left-wing members who felt that the objects of the Council should be identified with their own trade-union and political interests. There were two main disputes. The first arose from the interim report of the Council's own independent inquiry into the libertarian aspects of the miners' strike. The report made many criticisms of the police and some criticism of the pickets which was unwelcome to many left-wing members of the Council. But one statement provoked violent feelings of outrage. The inquiry stated that "the freedom not to take part in a strike is as much a fundamental right as the right to strike". Both the executive committee and the annual general meeting rejected this argument, which Mr Gostin himself defended. The second dispute centres on whether the Council should respond to malicious requests from the National Front for advice about political rights, and the claims of each side traverse the ground covered by Kidd and Pritt in the Council's early days.

The question whether democrats should tolerate intolerant and profoundly repugnant opinions has frequently been discussed by liberal thinkers. Probably the best-known observation on the subject is that of Renan.

> Liberty is the best weapon against the enemies of liberty. . . . Science can endure the virile rule of liberty; fanaticism and superstition cannot endure it. . . . The essential thing is not to silence dangerous doctrine, to quench a discordant voice; the essential thing is to put the human intellect in a condition in which the mass may see the uselessness of these outbursts of anger. When such a spirit becomes the atmosphere of a society, the fanatic cannot find anything more to live on. He is himself vanquished by the prevailing gentleness.

This is a courageous position, which presupposes a stable, mature and self-confident society. There may be circumstances in which it could reasonably be argued that such risks ought not to be taken by a democracy, but they do not exist for libertarians in Britain today.

An orderly uncertainty

John Beer

E.M. FORSTER
Selected Letters: Volume Two, 1921–1970
Edited by Mary Lago and P.N. Furbank
448pp. Collins. £17.50.
0002167190

Would Forster have enjoyed seeing *A Passage to India* as a film? He wrote more than once to Santha Rama Rau refusing permission, but he had allowed her to produce a truncated version for the stage, so that his opposition cannot have been absolute. He seems rather to have feared what would happen to any script he approved, what kind of parody might be produced for a mass audience. He might have jibbed at the beauty of the current film version (he did not remember India as particularly beautiful) and he would certainly have objected to the ending, which is more like the "bridging" conclusion he hoped for when he first drafted the novel; he went on thinking about his characters, however, and would no doubt have enjoyed the opportunity to see actors who made some of them appear more intelligent than he had done.

The letters in this second volume show him continually seeing his novel from different points of view, both during the composition and afterwards. He soon becomes aware that his old view of fiction is under strain. Until the First World War he thought that the novelist could achieve a controlling vision, worked for throughout the fiction and ending in a harmonic close. Now he has come to see that relativism is triumphing, in literature as in life. If writing fiction comes to him less easily than it used to, that is partly because he now questions some of its conventions – for example "that one must view the action through the mind of one of the characters; and say of the others 'perhaps they thought', or at all events adopt their view-point for a moment only". More than that, he thinks that novelists must recapture their interest in death – an interest which is preoccupying him because he finds his own emotions so often out of proportion with what he would have expected to feel. In letters and journals he returns to this question repeatedly, aggrieved that the difference death makes is always unpredictable in advance. He also fears that there may be a "functional defect" in his new novel: "the characters are not sufficiently interesting for the atmosphere. This tempts me to emphasize the atmosphere, and so to produce a meditation rather than a drama."

Once the novel was completed he thought it rather good and the sales were reassuring, but he could not help noticing that its success was primarily political. Perhaps he had been at fault in his decision "to show that India is an unexplainable muddle by introducing an unexplained muddle – Miss Quested's experience in the cave" – which he now thought involved "some confusion between the dish and the dinner".

The muddle of India was all the more crucial because it reflected the state of both the post-war world and his own life. When he had returned to India in 1921 Virginia Woolf had thought he might stay there, so great was his interest in Indian philosophy. Instead it was the fragmentation of the country that now obsessed him. He had taken the manuscript of the novel with him but could not add a word. Writing afterwards to Malcolm Darling he said

> Dewas . . . as it recedes, seems to me a mystic country where all we are accustomed to regard as important is performed as a game, and where we seldom grasp and never enjoy what *is* important. How I wish I knew what India is after! When I am there, she seems to me up to nothing at all. . . . And she hasn't the lure of beauty. But when I get away and am vexed no longer by her incomparable fatuity, my notion is that all the judgments I came to on the spot were wrong.

When he was not facing the multiversity of India, in other words, a different power took over in his mind, making harmony in what had been at best amiable chaos. But what was the status of harmony? There were times when,

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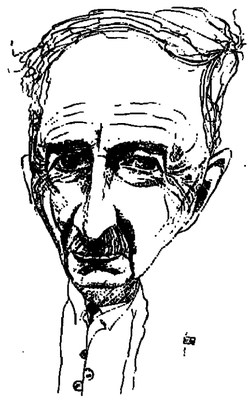
recalling the intuitions of his Maharajah and certain other experiences, he groped at the supernatural, but that would not do, either. As he wrote later of one of his youthful short stories, "It is a view of life (not an explanation unless one swallows the mysticism) and it does not tell us what to do . . .".

Unable himself to swallow the mysticism or dance Godbole's dance he could only ask "what to do" – which meant in his case returning to Europe and holding all the possibilities together in a general acceptance of fragmentation. "Live in fragments no longer. Only connect . . .". So Margaret Schlegel had urged in *Howards End*. A little later he himself had written to Forrest Reid, "My defence at any Last Judgment would be 'I was trying to connect up and use all the fragments I was born with.'" It had been a losing battle, however. On his second visit to India he found it "most interesting and friendly, but very disjointed. Or rather, I fear that I have lost my old power of joining it up."

From the beginning, of course, joining things up had involved a mixing of discourses which could be disconcerting to the reader. In his Indian novel this ability to hold them in solution was brought to a fine pitch, so that different readers could read the book quite differently. The ambiguity penetrated to the very centre of the novel – to Adela Quested's experience in the caves. Everyone wanted to know what had happened in the caves, but that was not the point. In a letter to Dickinson (not collected here) he wrote: "In the cave it is *either* a man, *or* the supernatural, *or* an illusion; if I say, it becomes whatever the answer a different book. And even if I know!"

After such an extraordinary achievement of alternating discourses, where was he to turn? Not to total scepticism, certainly. Even in the caves, it will be noticed, Forster still restricts the possibilities to three. And that kind of ordered uncertainty is a key to everything that follows. His letters, too, pursue different modes, according to the correspondent. One,



the homosexual, has the added barriers of a secrecy imposed by society. Otherwise he is sometimes the dutiful and affectionate son and nephew, sometimes the protesting liberal moralist, sometimes (most disconcertingly of all) a totally candid reporter of intimate feelings as demanded by the Bloomsbury Memoir Club. He could easily have rested in the first and second positions, tearing up his journals and erotic fictions, retaining the status that his public writings gave him, leaving no more than rumours of his private life. It was important to him, however, that those who were interested should be left with all the facts. When T.E. Lawrence was reading his work he sent him the proofs of *Aspects of the Novel*, the unpublished *Maurice* and "Doctor Wollacott", commenting, "these are items which you must have in your mind if you wish to sum me up". He was delighted when Lawrence liked the latter short story, where he felt that he had come as close as he would ever do to joining up his fragments and achieving – however momentarily – a unified voice.

The editors' method in this collection involves choosing the letters which say the best things, while omitting a number that have already been published. This brings out Forster's diversity of interests: his growing enjoyment of travel, his appreciation of music as he embarks on an analysis and appreciation of all Beethoven's piano sonatas, his delight in being invited in his late sixties to co-operate with Eric Crozier and Benjamin Britten in producing a libretto for *Billy Budd*. He is at his best when his position is askance and slightly damping, as when he tries to convince his friends that the best way of getting through the Second World War is to remember the trials of one's schooldays, or when he speculates that the "meek" who are blessed in the New Testament might simply be those who realize their own smallness in the universe. Sometimes the voice obtrudes more awkwardly, as when he resigns from the PEN Club following their association with a cruise to the grave of Rupert Brooke, or, more importantly, objects to the manner in which the wartime BBC is becoming a department of the Ministry of Information (a protest which helped the struggle to establish their independence at that time).

It is safer for a writer to present his or her public and published statements and leave posterity to judge. Once more vulnerable writings are known some critics will be swift to pounce. But as far as Forster was concerned this did not matter – all the more so because he would not be there to see. Just as in India he was dealing with a country which could not be held in the mind as a unity ("Nothing embraces the whole of India, nothing, nothing") so with his own experience – and with his writings as a whole. "See whether you can reconcile the statements with each other, and you will find that you cannot, alas that you cannot." There is a ruefulness here, but also, round the corner, a touch of mischief, answering to that spirit of comic irony in the world to which he was more responsive than most – the kind of comic irony that gave him, the most anti-authoritarian of writers, an erotic taste for uniforms, or, when he returned to India to find how it all was twenty years later, oppressed him with crowds who thought him important and sent him in a car for two hundred miles at the side of a very kind Englishman who never stopped humming Schubert. Even his social honesty is qualified by a touch of low cunning in surviving as a man and an artist: "I *can* do things for myself when there is no one to do them for me, but others shall do them for me whenever possible."

The editing is full and discreetly meticulous – though the discussion of Keats by Lionel Trilling which Forster so much enjoyed in 1959 must surely be the long essay reprinted in *The Opposing Self*, not the brief mention in *Freud and the Crisis of Culture*. The proportion of letters selected is small (fewer than 500 out of a total of 15,000) but that does not matter too much. Forster does not rank with letter-writers such as Keats or D.H. Lawrence: not quite enough of him comes out at a time. This selection gives us isolated perceptions – which are also a range of sidelights on an unusually turbulent period in British culture. Read with Forster's other work they join up more than they do here; in this collection what emerges above all is Forster's extraordinary resilience, his "alertness to what has not yet been experienced" – even in extreme old age.

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The road to alienation

Edward Timms

STEFAN ZWEIG
Tagebücher
660pp. Frankfurt: Fischer.
3 10 097068 3

Stefan Zweig was only an intermittent diarist, but his *Tagebücher* cover three of the most decisive phases of his career. They are written with unwonted frankness and their publication throws new light on both his personality and his age.

The earliest surviving diary covers the period 1912–13. It is notable for revealing glimpses of Zweig's erotic experience. The account of his meeting with Fridorike von Winternitz in September 1912 conveys the delicacy of their first encounters. But it shows that the relationship rapidly developed into erotic games on the hearth-rug. Zweig's growing commitment to Friderike, who later became his wife, did not preclude other more casual encounters (two women were bedded the same afternoon later that month). The irrationality of sexual attraction is vividly conveyed. Zweig is at times terrified by his own virtuosity and by the fact that "eroticism takes me, rather than me taking it". The delights of love have sombre undertones which remind him of Dostoevsky.

His affair with Marcelle in Paris in 1913 is described with even greater insight. Initiated less by lust than by curiosity, it became an overwhelming experience, centred on the fantasy of fathering a child. The glimpse of Zweig writing a book review in bed with Marcelle humanizes an author better known for fastidiousness than for emotional power. Another entry describes him, after an ecstatic night of love, planning a short story about a woman's sense of abandonment. But the details of Zweig's literary activities are of secondary interest. It was a period (he notes in April 1913) when he wrote little, but lived life to the full.

Even more significant are the diaries of 1914–18. As an apostle of non-violence with a sense of European solidarity, Zweig was horrified by the outbreak of war. He saw through the mask of patriotism, and his awareness of the sufferings of soldiers at the front is vividly conveyed. His diaries show that from the very beginning he feared that Austria-Hungary would be defeated. But [illegible] dismay at Austrian incompetence and an awe-struck pride in the military might of Germany. Zweig was clearly a pacifist, but he lacked the courage of his own convictions. Thus the diaries reveal the dismal spectacle of a writer aghast at the horrors of war and yet actively contributing to war propaganda. The extent of Zweig's propagandistic writings, many of them published anonymously or as part of the collective effort of the War Archive in which he served, has only recently become apparent. And yet in his diaries Zweig keeps reiterating his admiration for Romain Rolland, and reminding himself of the need to say a decisive "No!" to the war (when the time is ripe). But it was not until July 1918, when he was safely in Switzerland, that he plucked up the courage to proclaim an unequivocal pacifism. Rarely has a writer of such sensitivity shown so little moral resolution.

The final group of diaries deals with the 1930s, a period of political strife in Austria, journeys abroad (to Paris, London and New York, Brazil and Argentina), and finally exile in England. Here again the interest of the diaries lies less in the events recorded than in the vividness of Zweig's response to them. The literary historian too will find the diaries stimulating reading, both for the glimpses they afford of Zweig's own processes of composition and for his memorable pen-portraits of other authors – Wedekind and Rilke, Romain Rolland and James Joyce.

I know of no document which so poignantly conveys the paradoxes of erotic experience in that privileged era before the First World War; the pacifist dilemma during the war itself; and later the anguish of exile. In diaries written in England (and in English) in the autumn of 1939, Zweig portrays a world so claustrophobic that for him there can be no refuge: he is an Austrian whose country has been erased from the map, a Jew execrated in Germany, but in England an "enemy alien", doubly suspect as both German and Jew. Most moving are the unobtrusive references to the possibility of suicide. By May 1940 he has purchased the bottle of morphium which he may need. However much he may admire the tenacity of the British after the outbreak of the Second World War, he is aware that the house he has purchased in Bath will never be his home. The diary breaks off in June 1940 on the eve of his departure for Brazil, the country in which he was to end his life.

Mad dogs and Englishmen

E. S. Turner

VALERIE PAKENHAM
The Noonday Sun: Edwardians in the Tropics
255pp. Methuen. £12.50.
0 413 47180 2

There could be no more beautiful ideal than reclaiming peoples from barbarism, wrote the young soldier. "The act is virtuous, the exercise invigorating and the result often extremely profitable." That was, recognizably, Winston Churchill. A few years later, as Colonial Under-Secretary, he minuted his superior about a harsh punitive expedition conducted in Nigeria by British arms: "I see no reason why savage tribes should not be allowed to eat each other without restraint." Lord Elgin, we are told, "calmly dismissed" the comment. After all, even Joseph Chamberlain, eager as he was to make fruitful Britain's "undeveloped estates" overseas, could pen a disillusioned minute. "I have an idea", he wrote, "that we press sanitation and civilisation too strongly on these backward [West Indian] communities. If they like bad water or insufficient water, it might be as well to let them find it out for themselves."

The foregoing illustrates Valerie Pakenham's talent for digging out piquant quotations. Her lively, variegated account of how the Empire uplifted or disenchanted those who toiled for it derives from her discovery of the action-packed library amassed by her husband Thomas's great-uncle Bingo, with titles like *Rifle and Romance in the Indian Jungle, Fire and Sword in the Sudan* and other bracing variations on the Bible-and-bayonet theme. *The Noonday Sun* examines the attitudes and rivalries of administrators, settlers, traders, missionaries and soldiers, at a time when, according to *The Settlers' Guide*, Englishmen could still buy up tracks of the globe for as little as threepence an acre, even if they could not (as Lord Leverhulme wished) shunt native workers about the world at will.

Among the author's favourites, in terms of space allotted to them, are two district officers who gave up the jungle for literature and love: Joyce Cary (who wrote much about his days in West Africa) and Leonard Woolf. Woolf, arriving in Ceylon with ninety volumes of Voltaire, moaned much about colleagues and conditions in letters to Lytton Strachey, but soon took on many of the sterner attributes of his calling. It appears that if he had not gone home to marry Virginia he would have been happy as a jungli-wallah with a Sinhalese wife. However, Mrs Pakenham sees him rather as Sir Leonard Woolf, KCMG, issuing strict gubernatorial directives. The military scene is stolen by Richard Meinertzhagen, the fire-eating subaltern who carried the "Punjab principle" (a shot in time saves nine) to East Africa, where he developed "a kind of bloodlust". In the First World War, despite Allenby's disapproval, he tricked the Turks with opium cigarettes. This highly controversial figure deserves to be better known, if only because he picked up T. E. Lawrence and shut him in a Colonial Office cupboard for showing off.

The book notes some of the anomalies of empire. In India the box-wallah, or trader, was despised, whereas in the Far East he rode high. That old jest about the Empire being a form of outdoor relief for younger sons of the aristocracy was ill-based, the author says; by Recessional time it was very much a middle-class show, an outlet for the "clever cad", as Raymond Asquith nastily put it. Young aristocrats might still go out as soldiers or sportsmen, or to sow wild oats, as in Kenya. In that notorious land we meet Lord Delamere, the great pioneer, rising at four to plough, first breakfasting on gazelle chops to a "[illegible] "All Aboard For Margate". In his circle [illegible] set in, evidently, when men began dinning [illegible] pyjamas and women took to wearing short [illegible] Missionaries, as this book confirms, were no [illegible] body's love. There was a bizarre clash in Kashmir between Annie Besant's Theosophists and the academy run by the hearty Canon Tyndale-Biscoe, foe of "stench and sodomy", who expected his Brahmin slackers to leap thirty feet from a window into the lake on command.

Valerie Pakenham keeps a straight face at all times. She deals calmly (as GBS did not) with the Denshawai incident of 1906, when, in a dubious extension of the "Punjab principle", four Nile peasants were hanged after a fracas with British officers who had shot their tame pigeons. Whatever his views on Denshawai, Uncle Bingo would have enjoyed this book.

Eminent revival

Denis Judd

ROY MACGREGOR-HASTIE
Never To Be Taken Alive: A biography of General Gordon
195pp. Sidgwick and Jackson. £13.95.
0 283 99184 4

General Gordon's life (and death) has already spawned a vast number of books, articles and literary assessments of one of Victorian England's most controversial, celebrated and quirky heroes. Inevitably the centenary of his violent death at Khartoum in 1885 has prompted a renewed interest in his career, and has led to this new biography by Roy MacGregor-Hastie.

The publisher's blurb describes the book as a "a major new biography . . . drawing on fresh material", and also asserts that "Gordon's extraordinary life has long been due for reappraisal". The second claim is plainly nonsense: Gordon's life has been regularly reassessed, the more recent biographies having been published in 1972, 1974, 1975, 1978 and early in 1985. How far, then, does Professor MacGregor-Hastie's book offer the reader a genuine "reappraisal" or, for that matter, quantities of "fresh material"?

As far as reappraisal is concerned, it is unlikely that the reader will finish the book with his or her view of Gordon radically altered. That curious mixture of genius and pig-headedness, gentleness and violence, high morality and petty vice that characterized him is much in evidence. Even on the delicate matter of Gordon's sexual identity the author is conformist, quoting with approval the judgment of "Fred Plaut, a London psychiatrist" that "it seems obvious that he was more homo than hetero-sexual [but it] is improbable that he was ever a practising homosexual; in a man who lived so much in the public eye and had many enemies, this could hardly have escaped notice." Nor is there a serious reappraisal of the supporting cast in this high drama: Gladstone, the Mahdi, Queen Victoria and others all play their familiar parts. MacGregor-Hastie clearly has little time for Gladstone, which is fair enough, but as a result he is led to some rash conclusions – like describing the political consequences of Gordon's death as "disastrous" for the Liberal leader. But it is difficult to believe that they were when, within a few months of the catastrophe at Khartoum, Gladstone led his party to an election victory which gave the Liberals a majority of eighty-six seats over the Conservatives – Gordon's most steadfast political champions – then went on to become Prime Minister twice more.

There are, however, some scraps of fresh material in the book. Most of them concern Gordon's lengthy friendship with Romolo Gessi, a romantic, polyglot adventurer whom he met during the Crimean War. All in all, this is a disappointing book, despite a style which is brisk and lucid. Perhaps it is because MacGregor-Hastie's tendency towards hero-worship rather sticks in the gullet.

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Solutions to dissolution

Roz Kaveney

JAY McINERNEY
Bright Lights, Big City
182pp. Cape. £8.50.
0 224 02291 1
DYAN SHELDON
The Dreams of an Average Man
300pp. Heinemann. £9.95.
0 434 69527 0
GLORIA NAYLOR
Linden Hills
304pp. Hodder and Stoughton. £9.95.
0 340 36033 X

The urban unease that these novels depict has in them its artistic equivalent, a sense of less than absolute commitment to technical strategies adopted. The novel has traditionally celebrated community; can its traditional mechanisms be as readily applied to the corruption or disappearance, in the modern American city, of any participation in a common social existence? The narrative perversities of Jay McInerney, Gloria Naylor's frequent descents into the barn-storming of melodrama and soap opera, the insecurity which causes Dyan Sheldon constantly to over-egg her stylistic pudding – these serious flaws in three otherwise admirable books point to a sense that traditional fictions might not be ideally suited to the depiction of contemporary urban life, but just the best solution that comes readily to these authors' hands.

McInerney's *Bright Lights, Big City* is in many ways a stunning début: reservations have to do with tone, with uncertainty as to whether McInerney is manipulating our judgment of the amoral, sentimental, charming hero, describing journalistically and leaving us to draw conclusions, or colluding more deeply than he knows in his protagonist's flaws, telling us more than he intends. The unnamed hero (addressed throughout, for no obvious reason, in the second person) works – on the brink of dismissal for incompetence – in the Department of Factual Verification at a Famous New York Magazine, has been left by Amanda, the successful model he found in a Kansas bar and taught to be trendy, and is busily corroding his septum with "the powder that made Bolivia famous" in more night clubs than anyone could cope with in the course of an early morning. In one week he accepts the loss of his job, his wife and his year-dead mother; the writing he always means to get round to might be his salvation, or perhaps the preppy cousin of a friend might be; in the meantime, "You will have to learn everything all over again."

What saves all this from looming sentimentality is McInerney's very precise eye and ear, and his sense of the comedy that comes from character. His hero is the type who would fail consistently to perceive that the two women he and his friend Tad are escorting are considerably more interested in each other than in them. At the same time, a Chandleresque palette full of urban description convinces us that there is something to this self-wasting voice worthy of our consideration and our regard. If the other people in the novel are either caricatures (his dragon-lady boss, Clara) or play consoling roles (the Tough Younger Brother, the Supportive Older Woman Colleague) and forgive him his derelictions, that is how someone as selfish and stressed as he is would in general characterize the world around him. His first step on the way to reform is his acceptance that he never knew his mother as an individual rather than a role until the hour of her death, that he has never known, nor ever will know, his wife Amanda at all. *Bright Lights, Big City* combines slick but accurate phrase-making, excellently-paced scenes of comic embarrassment and a tone at once languid, rich and economical; over-insistence on the heart of gold the hero wears on his sleeve is no more than a minor irritation.

Dyan Sheldon's professionals in their late thirties inhabit a world that is marginally less strenuous in its social demands, but one which recognizably coexists on the same streets. Her first novel, *Victim of Love*, put a well-polished misandric boot into the radical and artistic pretensions of an adulterous professor; *The Dreams of An Average Man* is more balanced in its portrayal of the frustrated aspirations that come to a head with the male menopause, but, lacking the earlier novel's killer instinct, it also lacks much of its bite. Joke by joke Sheldon is as witty as ever, but she has lost confidence, and piles up individually lethal one-liners until the page clogs with them, and her timing goes altogether. Still, there is an attractive tenderness in her description of what may at novel's end prove a fruitful liaison between sold-out, street-wise social worker Tony and feckless designer Maggie, the fiancée of the preppy dentist who is the lover of Tony's neat, managing wife. Sheldon is impressive on the taxonomy of acquaintance but her cataloguing of other relationships, as well as establishing contrasts and distinctions, proliferates into irrelevancies, not all of them worthwhile as social observation, some spilling dangerously into the symbolic.

Like the earlier novel, *Dreams* is built up from set-pieces, most of them ritual social exchanges. Here too a striving for effect becomes irritatingly obtrusive; we are often nudged too hard. Sheldon's eye and ear are at bottom sound enough for her not to need to redouble hyperbole to make her points. When she has no huge comic tradition of awful family gatherings to surpass – an exchange between Maggie and Tony in a summer-dried park, for example – she is less self-conscious and more successful; and the failures of the novel are almost balanced by the human warmth with which she imbues even less attractive characters. Tony's radical chic wife Sandy is seen too accurately and enjoyably – "a spring in her step and a slogan in her heart" – for readers not to feel a guilty complicity in her awfulness.

After *Dreams*, Gloria Naylor's *Linden Hills* seems a model of economy and efficiency, and correspondingly thin in some of its textures, a little too obvious in the way its scenery-changes creak and wires show. It forms the second panel of that picture of contemporary urban Black life which Naylor started with *Women of Brewster Place*; where that book described the faults, passions and culture of the good poor, this shows the nullity of black lives that are led in imitation of suburban whites. The Nedeeds have, as improving landlords, givers of scholarships and vulgar blackmailers, created Linden Hills to be a black enclave of the prosperous, well-behaved and denatured; the current Nedeed avatar is the community's evil angel but also its voice of honesty. In one of the more successful touches of unabashed crudity with which Naylor peppers her text, his wife has produced a white child and been locked in the basement. During the week before Christmas, as the child starves and its mother goes mad contemplating the fates of earlier Nedeed women, two young drop-outs work their way from the least to the most affluent sections of the suburb doing odd jobs. It is, in no especially symbolic sense, the circles of Hell that Willie and Lester traverse. They have chosen poetry and lack of ambition; as they descend, their lives interlock with such of Nedeed's pawns as the preacher (who has turned to drink rather than seek the release of a revivalism unacceptable to his cool congregation) and the young gay lawyer who has sacrificed to his career his true love and his identity.

What keeps much of it from being embarrassing is the vigour of Naylor's language; one of the values which she opposes to the blandness Nedeed spreads is the rich, passionate speech of an earlier black era. And the verbal energy that holds together the unintegrated parts of this right-on soap opera does, after all, have something in common with the lilp polyanaiey that keeps McInerney's hero sympathetic, and with Sheldon's aphoristic prodigality. If there is a community left in American life, it subsists, for what it may be worth, in the survival of a language built of a myriad local dialects, and mutually comprehensible, if threatening, idiolects; it exists by dint of endlessly and vociferously shouting its contradictions.

Madhur Jaffrey
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Word-danger

John Clute

RAYMOND CARVER
Fires: Essays, poems, stories
204pp. Collins Harvill. £8.95.
0 00 271243 1
The Stories of Raymond Carver
447pp. Picador. Paperback, £3.50.
0 330 28552 1

There is a terrible silence common to Raymond Carver's stories, which have been acclaimed in his native America and, more recently, abroad. It is something like the silence one imagines must attend the bomb disposal expert in the final moments of his task. Too light a touch, and he could be there forever. Too heavy, and the whole affair may collapse in terminal melodrama, with all meaning blown away.

If the touch is right, as it is in so many of the fifty stories in these volumes, then it is possible for us to make out with great clarity the features of human beings caught in the fragile instant before their world explodes. For some that instant will last a lifetime. In the case of others, we view the catastrophe itself.

Most of the men and women featured here are uneducated. Almost all of them are married, or have been. Many of them have drinking problems. Most of them are working class, and live in a part of America – Northern California, Oregon, Washington – where some of the old occupations, like lumbering, have declined, so unlike their fathers, therefore, most of them work in service industries, as waitresses, salesmen and so forth. They inhabit the purlieus, the backwater small towns and cities, a far cry from the habituated dream-world of suburbia where most Americans now live, and which most American writers obsessively depict.

The bad job is lost, the river you could once fish in has been polluted, the marriage dissolves without a word being spoken, the adultery fails or is discovered, age shrivels the mind. Not only are words incapable of telling the whole truth, but uttering them may cause worlds to explode. The silence of Carver's stories is that of his protagonists, and the wary, fine, delicate strictness of his style, which has been mistakenly described as minimalist – is eloquent about the danger of speaking.

At the same time, there is in Carver's work a clean and evident lust to tell, to put his world on record. Though the deadpan tough-guy style and ugelessness of the style bears a superficial resemblance to that of Hemingway, who was also a regional writer, Carver is in fact much more closely akin to William Faulkner. Both set out to hone in what might be called the inferno of the region of their birth, and at sea elsewhere. Both are tellers of grimly hilarious tall tales. Both writers' protagonists seem blinded by the wind of time, the pressure of events. But Faulkner's genius burned out after a decade of creation; now in his second decade of production, Carver continues to flourish. He has invented a region of America, and an unmistakable voice to tell its tales.

The Stories of Raymond Carver, a large and inexpensive omnibus volume, contains along with the two collections already published in this country (*What We Talk About When We Talk About Love* and *Cathedral*), Carver's last "trade" collection as well, *Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?* It is only in the earliest stories from this first collection that an occasional superfluous expression can be found; almost from the first we can hear Carver's unique voice, impregnated with the unsayable.

In *Fires* there are stories, an assemblage of rather bald poems, and some essays. One of them, "My Father's Life", which only appears in the English edition of this book, could serve as a lynchpin and key to all of Carver's work. His father emigrated to the Pacific Northwest, and worked in lumber mills. In mid career his life fell apart, mysteriously, as with so many of Carver's protagonists. Carver's own ragged life, his drinking problem, his failed marriage, his sense of devastation, are all darkly illuminated through this account of his attempts to come to terms with his father, alive and dead. It also becomes clear that most of the finest stories in the two volumes have a kind of double life – as stories in their own right, and as coded autobiography.

The wacky woman's *whyyyyyy not* world

David Sexton

ELLEN GILCHRIST
Victory Over Japan
277pp. Faber. £9.95.
0 571 134467

Ellen Gilchrist's stories are made from the talk of the Mississippi Delta. New Orleans is her regular setting, and when she writes about California or Texas she does it by transporting her home team of characters so that they can say the extraordinary things they say about these places too. She has even begun aggressively to defend her territory. In this new collection, which won the 1984 American Book Award, there is a story about a New Orleans society lady writing a snotty review of a book called *The Assumption* by Anna Hand, evidently just a step on from Gilchrist's first novel, *The Annunciation*. She begins: "Ms. Hand's new book abounds in clichés, crude language, and uses real names of places in New Orleans in a way that can only be called name-dropping." In the story, this reviewer, Lady Margaret Lanier Sarpie, meets the novelist and is discomfited. More importantly, she has also been incorporated into Gilchrist's fictional world of hard-drinking, beignet-guzzling, dissatisfied women. Whoever this luckless reviewer was (and the tone of the stories is such that one has little doubt that she really was), her name has now been nicely dropped too, and no doubt caught in New Orleans.

Gilchrist's new collection has four groups of stories: three gathered around single characters, Rhoda, Nora Jane and Crystal, and the other a hold-all of odd-balls called "Crazy, Crazy, Now Showing Everywhere". All of these heroines are different incarnations of the same wacky woman, and perhaps the best of them is the first, Rhoda Manning, who featured in five tales in an earlier collection, *In The Land of Dreamy Dreams*.

The title story is a wonderfully funny, sharp piece, narrated by Rhoda, which begins: "When I was in the third grade I knew a boy who had to have fourteen shots in the stomach as the result of a squirrel bite." Rhoda sees both this ("No one would ever have picked him out to be the centre of a rabies tragedy. He was more the type to fall in a well or get sucked down the drain at the swimming pool") and the dropping of the Bomb exclusively through her own self-regard. In the first case this means the chance to write up the boy's mishap for the school magazine ("BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR MAD SQUIRREL, the headline read"), and in the second the not necessarily desired return of her father from the war ("'What do you mean, you can't catch her', I could hear him yelling. 'Hit her with a broom. Hit her with a table. Hit her with a chair.'"). At the end of the story Rhoda mingles public and private violence in a dream: "We live in flame. Buckle down in flame. For nothing can stop the Army Air Corps. Hit 'em with a table, I was yelling. Hit 'em with a bomb. Hit 'em with a chair."

This shows Gilchrist's talent at its best, with the naive assertive style given to the right character. The consciousness remains that of the schoolgirl in 1945, full of herself in a world she can't control, but the expressive abilities are those of the adult, shaping the memories. The use of the first person unites the two. Other stories, in the third person, feel more gratuitously mannered, and the short, sassy sentences less natural. As the *TLS* reviewer of her first collection observed, Gilchrist's true land of dreamy dreams is Adolescence, not just New Orleans. With her older characters the *naif* becomes the *faux-naif*, and sometimes altogether arch.

This caused problems in *The Annunciation*. What Gilchrist has done about it here is to keep the zany heroine but to hand over the narration to another character. The last group of stories, "Crystal", are a new step; the story-telling is delegated to the heroine's black maids, uncritically loyal reporters of the war against fathers, husbands and brothers. What Gilchrist evidently wants to do is to get even closer to the roots of Mississippi talk, and effect the enrichment of English by the rhythms of black speech. This is only partly successful because it is clear that her real interest still lies with Crystal, rather than with Traceleen, the maid, who is reduced to a narrative servant too. The simulation of the lacunae and digressions of speech is not enough to counter that feeling.

What comes through best is the infectious, languorous accent of the Delta. The plots are charming too, indulgently furnished as they are with drink, drugs, "Crab Thibodeaux and Shrimp Mousse and Softshell Crabs Richard" and more money than people know what to do with. Erratic and partial as Gilchrist's style is, the drawly "whyyyyyy not" world of the modern South which she creates is a great pleasure to visit.

Getting away from it all

Jill Neville

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214pp. André Deutsch. £8.95.
0 233 97752 X

The Something to be Desired in all of these American novels is whatever is the opposite of decadence. In Thomas McGuane's restless odyssey, Lucien holds on forever to a moment of wholeness in his otherwise fragmented boyhood, when his self-dramatizing, juvenile father for once pulled himself together and took his son on a trek into the American wilderness.

As the air gets purer, phrases shine like pebbles in a mountain stream before anyone ever heard of acid snow. Underneath is the all-American yearning of a son for a father, one who will not refuse to grow up, who is honourable and knows about men's things like horses and tents and fishing.

They come across a remarkable hot spring and for a brief time forget their troubles and float in "thermal blue". The spring is the central symbol of the book. It is the stillness inside the chaos, the ecstasy. Having seen it, Lucien must own it. The way he achieves this is barely credible. Not only is Lucien's father always arriving and departing, red-eyed and shouting, looking for kicks and reconciliations; his mother is a monster in hair-rollers. Then he has the misfortune to meet at the same time those twin stereotypes of Western movies, the good girl (Suzanne) and the bad girl (Emily). Emily is so bad, in fact, that she shoots her husbands, but she is the one who wears, psychologically at least, the black fishnet stockings, and brings out the sexual volcano in Lucien. It is with her that he makes love in the very waters of that thermal blue spring. Emily's ex-husband owns a ranch on the land where Lucien and his father once trod, and she leaves it to him as a sort of consolation prize when she runs off with the ranch hand. By this time Lucien is married to Suzanne and they have a son, James. The marriage has been good, but there is too much of his father in Lucien to tolerate contentment. One day the devil speaks to him in the form of a "deep realization" that his life is without high adventure, so he decides to leave.

The process of what he calls "stain" has begun; it sinks deeper inside him and causes turbulence, damage and shame. But on Emily's ranch he can look out through the tall prairie grasses on the stream bank and "start to lose his sense of irony" – then maybe Emily will love him. But Emily is irredeemable. There follows a period of chaos; the action is a little hard to follow, but the sense of debauch is clearly conveyed. To win back his wife and son and impress them with his sanity and new sense of responsibility Lucien turns the ranch into a prosperous business concern. Everyone wants to stay there, including an ex-Mafioso and those recovering from too much success. Lucien sportingly joins in an orgy with a group of foreign nannies who all have that "high-strung, peaked quality that Lucien associated with the end of civilization as we know it". Eventually, though, he is ready to put away childish things. He can even put away Emily when she next comes to tempt him. He has sloughed off his self-destructiveness and his father. He might even be rewarded with his wife and son, if they can ever trust him again.

All this is written in high sharp style, with humour and a touch of vulgarity. The lawyer, Wick, who wearily watches Lucien's capers, has one-liners worthy of Woody Allen. But there is no escaping the painful and deep wish for health, emotional stability and Nature which is the crux of it all. McGuane is at his best when he conveys the sense of the psycho-physical stirring of the cells in the midst of untramelled landscape, the oxygen entering the soul.

In Denis Johnson's *Fiskadoro* we are beyond the salvation held out by a blue thermal spring. This is a post-holocaust novel, set many years after the day the world blew up. It is a considerable imaginative feat, not by any means just a gruesome chronicle of horrors. Among the shards of civilization groups of survivors attempt to "live". The great symbol here is a broken clarinet which the boy Fiskadoro finds and brings to show Mr Cheung (again the central emotional relationship is the yearning of a boy for the good father). Mr Cheung patiently teaches the boy to play a few tunes, and together they talk bravely about forming an orchestra – while outside mutants creep. Eventually they [illegible] They came around and stood quietly in one place, tipping their heads, closing their eyes and listening as if this music came from far away or as if they were remembering it fondly from a time in their lives more sensible and beautiful than this one.

Despite prolific gifts, Johnson makes the reader flounder inside the strangeness of his apocalyptic vision. Too much is left unexplained for it to anchor firmly in the mind; we have to make too many assumptions about the human or sub-human flotsam and jetsam who wear radiation-sensitive buttons. And everyone talks in a kind of hispanic-pidgin English, which makes things more difficult, though it has the ring and rhythm of authenticity.

Stones for Ibarra is a more conventional but attractive first novel by a woman of seventy-five. Harriet Doerr has perhaps used long years of artistic gestation to pare down her style and intensify her vision. The story is the favourite fantasy of a worried urban society – to sell up, to pack up, to go back across America to a place off the map (in this case central Mexico), to re-open a grandfather's copper mine, to re-activate an ancient house, to create a means of livelihood for an impoverished community and in this way to do good for oneself and others. And to have a deeply stable marriage, withal. This dream would be rendered ludicrous by bad writing, but Doerr's is so stout-hearted and exact that we can suspend our cynicism. Richard and Sara are a happy couple, endlessly patient with the staring villagers; their story is interspersed with local yarns of these violent people, the drolness and savagery of Mexico.

Sara believes that the landscape, by its own force, has arrested time, but alas her husband gets sick, a fact she attempts to deny until he forces her to face it and "a woman not much older than herself stood alone in a dark windy place". They took a gamble when they came, seduced by a great-Aunt's memories. "They did not consider that memories are like corks left out of a bottle. They swell. They no longer fit." But Richard and Sara make it all fit again, down to the last tile, and even make the mine work. "It's a hell of a sweet operation", says the geologist to Sara, after her husband dies.

The satisfactions, not just of uxoriousness (conveyed with a powerful reticence), but also of human endeavour, are spelled out so calmly that at first the novel seems staid. But, unlike McGuane or Johnson, Doerr has absolute control of her narrative. Unsurprisingly, the novel has won the National Book Award in the United States.

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A loss of Beat

Lachlan Mackinnon

ALLEN GINSBERG
Collected Poems 1947–1980
837pp. Viking. £16.95.
0 670 80683 8
LEWIS HYDE (Editor)
On the Poetry of Allen Ginsberg
462pp. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. $22 (paperback, $12.95).
0 472 09353 3

Lewis Hyde's invaluable compendium of Ginsberg criticism contains an unpublished letter of 1952 from Marianne Moore to Louis Ginsberg, the poet's father, in which she hopes that her dimmish view of the son's poetry will not have estranged him from "wholesome pertinacity and humility". "As for William Carlos Williams, loyal though I feel to him personally, I wish he could perceive the folly of a doctrinaire attitude to degradation and unhope. We are here to transcend and help others transcend what impairs us." Williams is clearly the crucial early influence on Ginsberg, but Moore's tone here uncannily anticipates the contradictions in Ginsberg's career.

One side of Ginsberg is literal and exact, as in the beautiful "Dream Record: June 8, 1955", where, after meeting the ghost of Joan Burroughs, accidentally killed by her husband, he ends by seeing "her rain-stained tombstone / rear an illegible epitaph / under the gnarled branch of a small / tree in the wild grass / of an unvisited garden in Mexico". Here, as in the formally freer but no less taut "To Aunt Rose", Ginsberg makes the imagined facts speak for themselves; but elsewhere he is vatic and windy in wishing "people to bow as they see me and say he is gifted with poetry, he has seen the presence of the Creator". His faith that "poor Genet will illuminate the harvesters of Ohio" shows an innocence about his culture which vitiates his work.

The young Ginsberg was clearly very much on the make: in Hyde's collection, Diana Trilling embarrassingly but tellingly records her feelings on seeing him read at Columbia and her sense of his search for academic respectability. The enormous *Collected Poems* entombs that search, with introduction, notes and occasionally comic index entries ("Bill, see Burroughs, William S."). Ginsberg claims that the notes "transmit cultural archetypes to electronic laser TV generations that don't read Dostoyevsky Buddha bibles", though an absence of annotation suggests that they do read Hart Crane. This grouchy professorial tone is a new one for the author, but betrays unwittingly the cultural sterility of the volume. Some of the poems have been revised. For instance, "To Lindsay" used to tell us that "the shadow hand lifts up a pistol to your head / your shade falls over on the floor", but in the interests of historical accuracy this ominous silent movie has been changed to "the shadow hand lifts up a Lysol bottle to your head / your shade falls over on the floor", which suggests simply that Vachel Lindsay had trouble finding his mouth. Ginsberg's urge to mythologize himself, his heroes and his friends ("We are a legend, invisible but / legendary, as prophesied") takes his eye off the things where Williams insists ideas should be found.

The story of Ginsberg's life is one of painful adjustment to "a sad case of refusing to / grow up give birth to die", becoming "bearded hairy bald with age" but remaining scarred by his mother's insanity and his own homosexuality. The latter is graphically celebrated too often to shock but usually too lamely to excite. Ginsberg made himself a celebrity by hiding nothing: "I am a Victim of Telephone" conveys the absurdity of this status in the line "ring ring 'Hello this is Esquire be a dear and finish your political commitment manifesto'". The very funny "Mugging" tells how hoodlums made off with, among other things, his "Amex card & Manf. Hanover Trust Credit too" despite his chanting a mantra at them. The realization, as neighbours refuse to get involved, "Gee I don't know anybody here", is touching and acute in its naive "Gee". In "Brooklyn College Brain", Ginsberg no longer wears "dungarees & blue workshirt" but "tweed jacket & yr father's tie", but he has achieved this upward mobility by writing poems with titles like "Consulting I Ching Smoking Pot Listening to the Fugs Sing Blake". He has at least the grace to share our mirth.

However, the poet lost in the process was one with a sharp unpretentious eye. "City Midnight Junk Strains" commemorates "Frank O'Hara's bones / under cemetery grass". "I see New York thru your eyes", Ginsberg claims, but he doesn't: O'Hara's "I do this, I do that" poems preserve a more sensitive balance between feeling and observation than most of Ginsberg's work.

> Reading Sung poems, I think of my poems to Neal
> dead few years now, Jack underground
> invisible – their faces rise in my mind
> Did I write truthfully of them? In later times
> I saw them little, not much difference they're dead
> They live in books and memory, strong as on earth.

This first part of "Returning to the Country for a Brief Visit" is movingly truthful until the odd wrongness of its last line. Except perhaps for the late *Big Sur*, Kerouac's novels give more the impression of what Kerouac wanted to be than of what he actually was: Neal Cassady's best memorial is not in Kerouac's fiction, Ginsberg's poetry, Tom Wolfe's *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test* (1968) or the Grateful Dead's plaintive songs "The Other One" and "Cassidy" (*sic*), but in his own unsparingly bleak autobiographical *The First Third* (1971). As Charley Shively remarks in Hyde's book, Cassady's attraction was one of "sweet dependency", the fascination of a "free-wheelin' stud – who brought out love in both Kerouac and Ginsberg because he was himself incapable of love". Ginsberg has never fully faced the desolation at the heart of the Beat generation, for all his lachrymose memorials. He is much more successful when dealing with his own desolation, as in "Don't Grow Old" on his father's death. *Kaddish*, the only effective long poem of his career, or the haiku-like opening of "Sad Dust Glories": "You were here on earth, in cities – / where now? / Bones in the ground, / thoughts in my mind." In "Maybe Love" he faces his own ageing, "now I'm an old fairy", and the erotic loss it entails. "Reflections at Lake Louise" finds him on a Buddhist retreat. "I wander this path along little Lake Louise, the teacher's too busy to see me, / my dharma friends think I'm crazy, or worse, a lonely neurotic, maybe I am – / Alone in the mountains, same as in snowy streets of New York." Earlier in the same poem, Ginsberg wonders, "If I had a heart attack on the path around the lake would I be ready to face my mother?" – a laceratingly direct question.

That Ginsberg's best work is wholly personal and descriptive stems from his lack of a true culture. *The Fall of America* (1965–71) opens with three-and-a-half pages of evocative travel notation, but degenerates into an attempt to apply the method of Pound's *Cantos* to contemporary life. Pound and his more faithful disciples had at least a sense of what the past meant and how it might be called on for judgment, whereas Ginsberg's imported Buddhism is rootless and useless. These poems mostly contrive to be much duller than Olson's *Maximus* poems, which is some sort of achievement, and Ginsberg's ranting against the Vietnam war has no true tradition to invoke. His denial of his opponents' humanity is unappealing, and he might usefully have learnt from Robert Lowell's uneasy identification with Lyndon Johnson in "Waking Early Sunday Morning". Ginsberg's entire lack of negative capability makes him incapable of political understanding, and converts his ambitious narrative "Contest of Bards" into tedious erotic fantasy at the crucial moment.

Some of the more recent poems are set to music, apparently encouraged by Bob Dylan. Ginsberg's appearances in Dylan's *Renaldo and Clara* made for some of the more embarrassing moments in that uneven film, and the comparison with Dylan is instructive. Through Woody Guthrie and the folk tradition, Dylan draws on the American radical and anarchist background in which Ginsberg grew up but which he seems never to have understood, the world of the Wobblies and Sacco and Vanzetti, while through his reading in English and French poetry, Dylan is related to both Browning and nursery rhyme. The fragments of the past which appear in Dylan's songs movingly remind us of what may have been lost, where Ginsberg's bodhisattvas unhappily resemble Dylan's "flesh-colored Christs that glow in the dark". Dylan is a better artist than Ginsberg because he doesn't horse around pretending to be both Whitman and a master of Eastern wisdom but gets on with exploring and developing inherited forms in new directions. Ginsberg's *Collected Poems* show us the prodigious squandering of an enormous potential. He has learnt his manners from his masters, but has not understood the coherence of their forms with their subjects, and has been too lazy to shape his material as it, like any material, demands. It seems terribly sad now, but history will say it was just too bad.

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Violent ends

Peter Hainsworth

FREDERICK SEIDEL
Men and Woman: New and selected poems
70pp. Chatto and Windus. Paperback, £4.95.
0 7011 2868 2

Men and Woman, Frederick Seidel's first collection of poems to be published in Britain, contains just thirty poems – one, the excellent "Wanting to Live in Harlem" from his first American book, *Final Solutions* (1963), twenty from his second, *Sunrise* (1980), and nine which are new. All told it would be a parsimonious selection from a sparing poet, if its contents were not so dense and so various.

Much of Seidel is strong emotion and strong sensation in concentrated doses. Dean Rusk, for example, at a press-conference, in "Freedom Bombs for Vietnam (1967)", "holds up a tell-tale map / Of rice swimming in blood like white flies". A sunset becomes almost as horrific in "A Dimpled Cloud": "The room is already dark while outside / Rosewater streams from a broken yolk of blood." And a poem's ending has rarely been as complete as that of "Flame": "In the dark a flame goes out. And then / The afterimage of a flame goes out." But Seidel is not limited to the poetic equivalent of painterly neo-expressionism. He writes in more oblique vein, for example, on transience and catastrophe while reminiscing about an exclusive birthday dinner of chic New Yorkers:

> Poised and hard, but dreaming and innocent –
> Like the last Romanovs – spring buds at thirty, at
> thirty-two,
>
> We were green as grapes,
> A cluster of February birthdays,
> All "Elaine's" regulars.

Loss of innocence, be it as dubious as that which these lines from "Pressed Duck" allude to, is one of Seidel's two main themes. Its political side is the series of traumas stretching from Vietnam to the American hostages in Iran, with their internal correlative of failed revolution or reform. "The gun is mightier than the word", says the dead Robert Kennedy, a dreamer come back in a dream-poem named after him. It is partly from that defeat for the logos that Seidel's own violence springs, including his enthusiasm for the word as offensive weapon. But there is also the personal (or general) trauma of the loss of childhood, even when the childhood is as painful as that which has its pain and loss remade in "Wanting to Live in Harlem" and "The Blue-eyed Doe" – the latter being the last poem in the book and one of the best. Its final lines come close to an annulment of violence:

> The son who holds his sword above Art Hill;
> Who holds it almost like a dagger but
> In blessing, handle up, and not to kill;
> Who holds it by the blade that cannot cut.

Here and elsewhere Seidel welcomes Freudian imagery and its mechanics, while knowing that if symbolizing does not exorcize, it is at least not off target. The title-poem in particular makes much of the bike-magazine twinning of motorbike ("A phallus which was musical when it roared?", asks Seidel at one point, clearly wondering the same about poetry) and pin-up girl, who of course might be *magna mater*, Venus, Juno. But he also knows that Freudian stories are only one line of attack.

"The key lines in "Men and Woman" are the ones from which the title is taken: "The meaning of the enormous quiet split / Into men and woman around the motorcycle". The "enormous quiet", the reality behind any mythography, is Seidel's other major focus. Some poems, particularly the more recent ones, take it as one of their themes, but many have it built into them more deeply, as a shifting, opaque core that generates the flow of reflection and highly charged imagery, but itself refuses to come into the light. For the process to work Seidel has to impose discipline. When he relaxes, the result is unhappy. The loose, individually unelaborated bits of "Fucking", for instance, do not make up more than the messy, joky message that life and poetry are messy jokes. This is in sharp contrast to, say, "Sunrise", which forces much complex, unstable material into its forty nine-line stanzas with their unusual rhyme schemes, as it works its tortuous way towards what is variously blast-off, resurrection, death, waking up or just the end of the poem;

> I wake beneath my hypnopompic erection,
> Forty stanzas, forty Easters of life,
> And smile, eyes full of tears, shaking with rage.

In the end that is a problem: anger and disgust make themselves readily felt, while more positive feelings, like real meanings, remain almost always before, outside or after the poem. Seidel extracts some good jokes, some striking music and some rich imagery from the evil of his fallen world, at the cost of making many poems collude with the hell they are out to combat. But he lays on emotion with great sophistication. His work is not always likeable, but much of it has the power to disturb and impress that a great deal of contemporary poetry lacks.

Readers are reminded that the closing date for entries to the Arvon Foundation / *Observer* / Ronald Duncan Foundation International Poetry Competition is May 31. Entry forms from: The Arvon Foundation, Kilnhurst, Kilnhurst Road, Todmorden, Lancashire.

Into the harmonium

Lucy Beckett

HELEN VENDLER
Wallace Stevens: Words chosen out of desire
86pp. University of Tennessee Press. $8.95.
0 87049 427 9

This small book, consisting of four lectures and a brief introduction and mainly concerned with the exposition of a handful of short poems, tells the reader a good deal more about Wallace Stevens's poetry and Stevens as a poet than many a weighty volume occupying a respected place in the literature. Helen Vendler writes from an inwardness with Stevens's work that she disarmingly describes in her introduction. "Though there are poets undeniably greater than Stevens . . . he is the poet whose poems I would have written had I been the poet he was . . . Perhaps there is no better way of understanding Stevens than to imagine oneself writing the poem – to write it out as if it were utterance of one's own." It is a refreshing approach. Professor Vendler implies that devoted patience in the face of his idiosyncrasies will unlock the difficulties presented by this notoriously problematic poet. Her new book, perhaps even more than *On Extended Wings* (1969), her sure-footed work on the longer poems, demonstrates that this can indeed be the case.

Stevens was, perhaps to an unparalleled degree, the poet of a private world of words that became in the course of a long writing life a whole world, "The Whole of Harmonium" as he wanted to call his collected poems. And yet the symbolic and referential furniture of this world is no matter of arcane labelling, like Blake's, but of the simplest counters of universal experience, sun, moon, sea, birds, winter, summer, primary colours. It is prolonged attention to the complexities of tone and habit with which Stevens builds his poetic world (and to the many points at which it touches the poetic inheritance) that can eventually disclose the meaning of its parts. As Vendler says, "Stevens's commitment to . . . the secrecies of an impersonal presentation and a resolutely elliptical discourse, makes him a poet knowable in the instance only when he is known in the whole". It is this demandingness, implicit in everything he wrote, that has prevented Stevens becoming, even a quarter of a century after his death, the central poet that his admirers feel he ought to be, and in so far as this failure to achieve acknowledged greatness is a pity, the demandingness has to be recognized as a fault.

One of its unfortunate consequences is that his critics are apt to find themselves writing as gnomically from within his world as Stevens does himself. Even Vendler is not exempt from this kind of thing: "It is at once the ABC of being and also its X, the Alpha and Omega of self, that which the Prince of Peacocks had been afraid to face – Berserk and his traps of steel", in which sentence only the first phrase refers to the poem under discussion. But she falls very rarely into such obscurity, and the shining merit of these lectures is their capacity to elucidate single poems, some familiar anthology pieces ("The Emperor of Ice Cream", "The Snow Man", "Anecdote of the Jar"), others much less familiar, so that they stand alone as comprehensible entities.

The key to this success is the devotion that has accompanied her patience, a devotion that responds, in particular, to the warmth and sadness, the emotional depth, that Vendler finds in Stevens. This is of course the very quality that he is commonly supposed to lack: he has been found frivolously hedonistic or chillingly cerebral by so many for so long that he has become, as Vendler says, "a genuinely misunderstood poet . . . in the world at large". Those readers who have sensed both the urgency of feeling and the forlornness in Stevens's poems, but have found the obliquities of his manner and diction often impenetrable, will be grateful for the tact and moderation of these fresh interpretations. Their special achievements are that they convince, movingly and with a simplicity not often found in Stevens commentary, and that they then leave the poem to reassemble in the mind as wholly itself. Among the best examples are the accounts of "A Postcard from the Volcano" and "The River of Rivers in Connecticut", two beautiful and under-rated poems.

The adverse criticism of some aspects of "The Idea of Order at Key West" is a little harsh: this has always been one of Stevens's most accessible poems and Vendler seems almost to be objecting to this very characteristic. It is, however, alas, impossible to refute her charge, in a footnote, that "the English incomprehension of Stevens continues almost unabated (Frank Kermode being the exception that proves the rule)". This book should help to dispel at least some of that incomprehension, and will have much to teach even those who feel quite at home in Stevens's world.

Faulty visions

Tim Dooley

JOHN MATTHIAS
Northern Summer: New and selected poems 1963–1983
222pp. Anvil Press. £10 (paperback, £6.95).
0 85646 114 8

Northern Summer includes selections from John Matthias's three previous collections, *Bucyrus* (1970), *Turns* (1975) and *Crossing* (1979), ten new poems and a number of translations and miscellaneous pieces. A Mid-Westerner by birth and Professor of English at the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana, Matthias has visited this country frequently and his poems reveal an imagination gradually becoming colonized by British landscapes and history while retaining a characteristically middle-American spaciousness and ambition.

Matthias is a learned poet, who can be by turns a spiky humorist, a worried chronicler and an elegant fantasist. His earliest work veers uneasily between mawkish confessionalism (unrepresented in this selection) and collage of archaic texts rather obviously influenced by Charles Olson or David Jones. In *Bucyrus*, it is only in comic work that his poetry develops its distinctive, abrasive tone and, while it is pleasing to see "Renaissance" here, it is a pity that some of the more arcane lyrics from "Poem in Three Parts" have been retained at the expense of the anarchic "Three Dreams" or the sinister "Rules".

The poems from *Turns* onwards are more serious and accomplished. Opposing "Accretion . . . and possibility" to the Alvarezian extremity then fashionable ("Part of an Answer"), Mathias offers fine ethical distinctions. Poems addressed to friends create a convincingly personal tone without embarrassing the reader. At the same time, they explore the inevitably inadequate truthfulness of the versions of life we maintain through art, belief, or the evidence of our senses.

Matthias's reading of the world shifts between falsifiable literalism and the search for an underlying sense which is unverifiable. At the beginning of "Clarifications", the wren seen in a field is revealed to be a product of the poet's "defective vision". At the end of the poem, Matthias wishes to claim that the unhappy girl he sees pretending to be a wren in the same field becomes the bird he had earlier dismissed as a "floating mote . . . a flaw . . . In the eye of the beholder".

In "Part of an Answer" Matthias writes "I try to make the / evil things, secondary / worlds". The occasional, contingent nature of his work, so much of which is dependent on reading or travel, is obviously a matter of pride to him, not something which might lead to an admission of marginality. His attachment to "quotation, commentary, pastiche" may have its source in an affection for medieval practice, but its justification is the paradoxical freedom of manner his approach allows, bringing together experiences and expressions from different centuries and continents to create cultural hybrids. Abundant linguistic invention and scrupulousness make *Northern Summer* a particularly refreshing and likeable book.

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Stamping out sin

Peter Hebblethwaite

FURIO COLOMBO
God in America: Religion and politics in the United States
Translated by Kristin Jarratt
176pp. Columbia University Press. $18.
0 231 059728

Furio Colombo is a scholar-journalist who writes in *La Stampa* and teaches international affairs at Columbia University. The original Italian title of his book, *Il Dio d'America*, was bolder. He has a thesis to propound. It is that "religion is to American culture, politics and life, what ideology is to French, Italian, Spanish and other European cultures, politics and life – a key, a matrix, a way of explaining and organizing otherwise confusing events". That begs a number of questions about "European culture", but Colombo can be forgiven that. He can only do one thing at a time.

I think he proves his thesis. Unfortunately, his reflections were prompted in the first place by the election of 1980 when "born again" Democrat Jimmy Carter was defeated by "moral majority" Ronald Reagan. Four and a half years and another election later, life has moved on. The President's exploitation of Christian themes has become still more reckless: he has told the world that he regards liberation theologians as agents of Marxism, compared the Contras fighting against the Nicaraguans to the Pilgrim Fathers and hinted that a nuclear first-strike against the Soviet Union might be an economical route towards the biblical Armageddon. Most of what Colombo says has been confirmed and sharpened. So the interest of his book lies in how it all came about. ("Look at the process as well as the result", advised Lord Acton.)

Colombo invites us to look at the process. His starting-point is the Revd Jerry Falwell's press conference of February 5, 1981, when he declared war on sin in the name of the "moral majority" whose influence, it was held, had contributed importantly to Reagan's election triumph. Sin had been denounced before then, but what was new was the swaggering confidence and intolerance, and the combination of old intimidation with new technology. Television was to be one of the major instruments of the campaign, capturing Americans at their most vulnerable moments – in motels in the middle of the night – and endowing the proliferating smaller Churches with a sense of power. Mainstream Christians on the whole stayed out of the moral majority. Even Billy Graham regarded it with suspicion. He was too "moderate" a figure for the new intransigents. The Catholic Church, though wooed by the prospect of an anti-abortion campaign, was not interested because it was moving in altogether different directions.

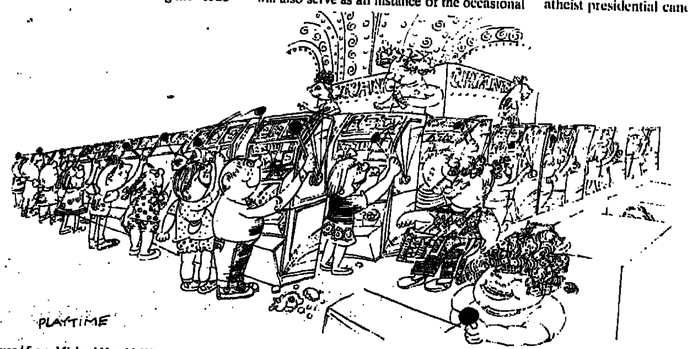
The result was, however, that political debate shifted from the political parties to the Churches. This had always been a tendency in American life, sometimes in a negative mode (eg, McCarthyism), sometimes more positively as in support for Roosevelt's New Deal in the 1930s and the civil rights movement of the 1960s. The appointment of the Revd Andrew Young as United States Ambassador to the United Nations may be said to have consecrated the civil rights movement. The moral majority seeks to bury it, having in common with McCarthyism intolerance and a preference for opposing rather than affirming. But it filled in the vacuum of the Republican Party after the humiliations of Watergate. Colombo writes: "The political parties are caught between the desire to avoid religious issues (such as abortion or prayers in the school) and the evidence that religious issues are a relevant part of the debate." But after the 1984 election, it is harder to maintain that the Republicans wanted to "avoid religious issues". Moreover, there is some evidence that a "religious issue" (eg, a perceived hesistancy on abortion on the part of Geraldine Ferraro) handicapped the Democrats; and that this alleged "weakness" was deliberately introduced into the campaign by the new Archbishop of New York, John J. O'Connor.

But Colombo does not get that far in the story. He is at his best in unmasking the "code-words" constantly used by the moral majority. Here is a brief glossary. The defence of "human rights" means seeking to ban abortion. "Family morality" can lead one to declare war on pornography, seek segregated Christian schools away from the contemporary drug culture, oppose ERA (giving equal rights to women and men) and draw up a blacklist of banned books such as Desmond Morris's *The Naked Ape*. "Creationism", as developed in its San Diego headquarters, equals anti-Darwinism, and works on the principle that if Darwin can be shown to be inadequate, then the Bible account of creation is somehow demonstrated.

Curiously for an Italian, Colombo's touch deserts him when he deals with the Roman Catholic Church. He gets some facts wrong. The Catholics and Episcopalians did not celebrate a joint Eucharist on March 8, 1981, at Norfolk, Virginia. Pope John Paul II did not condemn liberation theology at a Eucharistic Congress in Mexico in 1978 but at a CELAM (Latin American Bishop's Conference) meeting in Puebla in 1979. He puzzles over why the Catholic hierarchy so readily blessed the "charismatic movement". I can tell him why: to take it over benignly was the only way to prevent it drifting away. Yet he is probably right to say that, with their pastoral letter on nuclear weapons, *The Challenge of Peace* (reviewed in the *TLS*, February 24, 1984), the US Bishops had done something novel: "For the first time in American history, and perhaps in many centuries of Catholic history, a religious position has expressed a passionate contradiction with the political position of its government" (that will also serve as an instance of the occasional awkwardness of this book's translation). But then he mulls it by not grasping the originality of the American Bishops. he pictures them as both to the left (on nuclear policy and Central America) and the right (on abortion) of the Administration. It was precisely an attempt to resolve this paradox that lead Cardinal Joseph Bernardin to put forward the theory of "the seamless robe": by this he meant that Catholics would be found in the first rank of the defenders of life, whether life was threatened by nuclear weapons or by abortion, and that neither issue would be given an absolute preference. This neatly stymied his opponents. And on the whole the "seamless robe" stance has been maintained.

Colombo does not provide an index, but it is evident that Pope John Paul makes numerous appearances, not, alas, as a defender of the "seamless robe" theory but as someone who can be exploited as a defender of "moral majority" positions. Colombo hints at this view without developing it. It would have to be explored in a second volume. Nor could he have been aware at the time of writing of the "new Catholic Right" associated with Michael Novak of the American Enterprise Institute. More sane and rational than the moral majority, it has been trying to persuade the US Bishops, as they draft a pastoral letter on economic questions, to accept that revamped capitalism and sturdy liberalism provide the best chance for alleviating the lot of the poor in the Third World as well as in the developed world.

God may not actually be an American, but he has many fans there. One would not give an atheist presidential candidate much chance.



Reproduced from Michael Heath's Welcome to America *(123pp. Heinemann. Paperback, £5.95. 0 434 31425 0), to be published next week.*

Taming the young ones

Mary Lefkowitz

JUDITH MARTIN
Miss Manners' Guide to Rearing Perfect Children
405pp. Hamish Hamilton. £9.95.
0241 114918

"There is one universal law among men, gods and all animals: for parents to love their own children" – at least, according to a character in one of Euripides' lost plays, who might well have added, "and almost never anyone else's". We can be sentimental about babies in the abstract, but not about the screaming infant behind us in the aeroplane, or the sticky-fingered toddler running up and down the aisles, or sitting in the lavatory screaming, "I can't GO!", while his mother or father looks about proudly, as if to say, "Isn't he cute?" Anyone in the United States who is exposed to public travel, or who works in an office where mothers bring their nursing babies and where during school holidays children race in the corridors – that is, virtually everyone – will find comfort in *Miss Manners' Guide*. Even if Miss Manners, unlike Herod the Great, cannot eliminate the children, she can reassure us that we are right to resent unruly behaviour, and even suggests polite, tasteful gestures we can make to bring about improvement in their (and their parents') conduct: "a parent who does not civilize his child leaves civilization the task of defending itself, and you had better save your premises from such children."

That Miss Manners's advice is available not only in book form but also daily in one's local paper shows that she is dealing with a national problem almost as important as crime or even sex. It seems clear that at every level of American society, from the most deprived to the most affluent and privileged, parents prefer to leave to others the task of teaching rules of proper conduct. In some cases, certainly, the parents' failure is due to ignorance or inertia; in many others, it is the consequence of geographical and social mobility; among educated people it is the result of a devout reliance on professionalism! For young children from Boston's comfortable Western suburbs, etiquette classes are now held the first Saturday of every month in the panelled-oak dining-room of the Parker House Hotel. For $10 a visit, the children are instructed which fork to use ("start from the left, and work to the right"), not to put their elbows on the table and how to hold a soup-spoon.

Miss Manners's book, like the newspaper column from which it is compiled, offers equally "professional" advice for a wider range of social problems. Life in American middle-class families of the 1980s seems to bear little resemblance to the happy scenes of childhood depicted in the *Saturday Evening Post* of Miss Manners's own childhood, where the biggest problems were Responsibility (shamefaced, red-haired, freckled-faced kid holds baseball-bat behind his back while Pa looks disapprovingly at broken window) or Growing Up (Ma, shown holding back tears, Dad smirking, Sonny looks round for approval while getting first haircut or trying on first long trousers; or Ma seen beaming, Pa scowling, while Sis leaves for the Prom with her date). Now, to judge from what Miss Manners advises, mother and father rarely live in the same house, or even care what each other thinks or does, are busy with their jobs and have little time or concern for the childhood *rites de passage* that once would have claimed their best attention. Most of the people who write the letters that Miss Manners answers in her column describe themselves not as parents of the offending children, but as sisters, aunts, stepmothers, grandmothers, friends (mostly female) or as the children themselves.

Miss Manners advises these victims of society to fight back, not with the violence and insensitivity with which they have been treated, but with a studiously polite hypocrisy that might be even more devastating were it ever understood. When a visiting little girl tries to put your cat in the freezer, assure her that Tinkerbell is vicious and will scratch her pretty little face. When your twelve-year-old complains that he always has to take the bus while his seven-year-old sister is driven everywhere, assure him that getting round by oneself is a privilege and an adventure. Miss Manners advises that every parent teach his child a signal, which, although unnoticed by others, will convey to the child an instant warning that his present behaviour is unacceptable; only after that failsafe signal should stronger measures be employed, even in the presence of disapproving onlookers.

Miss Manners's advice, although directed primarily to families, will be useful for an equally victimized population, the children's teachers. Miss Manners works to restore the respect for experience that (rather than age) gives the adult his or her real authority, and to encourage restraint of one's true feelings and consideration for others even when they least deserve it. Such behaviour runs counter to the favourite traditions of American education, which encourage spontaneity and self-expression for the child, urge the teacher to give credit for trying and attitude, as well as for performance, and encourage students to think that all their opinions have value, especially if they, or their parents, are paying the bill.

In general Miss Manners disapproves completely of the excessive familiarity that has now become endemic: universal use of first names, and the sincere, thoughtful critique, like "you look awful; are you depressed? let me recommend my therapist". Inevitably, perhaps, in the television age, many people feel that they have acquired some expertise in regarding with critical scrutiny what others do, and thus seem to themselves qualified to offer unsolicited opinions about how their acquaintances' performance might be altered or improved. But Miss Manners in this respect, as in all others, resists prevailing trends of behaviour. She herself never tells us her own first name, she writes about herself in the third person, and in life, as in her column, offers advice only when asked.

The houses against the White House

Geoffrey Marshall

LOUIS FISHER
Constitutional Conflicts Between Congress and the President
372pp. Princeton University Press. £47.25 (paperback, £8.10).
0691 076804

The separation of powers doctrine has become, over time, a comic constitutional monstrosity – a thing of inferential leaps and slippery implications. It is not true that anything at all can be said to follow from it, but almost anything can.

Oddly perhaps, the Constitution of the United States nowhere mentions the separation or autonomy of the legislative and executive branches. Indeed, anyone reading Articles One and Two might even doubt the existence of any such principle and see in them a scheme of legislative supremacy. Congressional power to control executive action is in fact far-reaching. The two Houses of the legislature have the power of the purse, wide powers of investigation and a monopoly of legislative authority. The Senate's consent is necessary for the making of treaties, the appointment of ambassadors and Supreme Court Justices and of all other officers of the United States unless the Constitution or legislation has vested their appointment elsewhere. Moreover, both Houses together can, by impeachment, remove the President from his office altogether. They are separated from him but he is not separated from them.

None the less, as repository of the executive power of the United States and as Commander in Chief of its Army and Navy, the President, through time, has gathered and exercised powers that have led historians and politicians to speak about executive tyranny and of an Imperial Presidency.

In 1978 Louis Fisher of the Library of Congress Congressional Research Service published a prize-winning study, *The Constitution Between Friends*. Here this is republished as a new and extended study of constitutional conflicts between the Presidency and Congress (a place where the American King notoriously has need of his Friends).

The areas of political conflict are clear. They exist where one branch of government has what Madison in *The Federalist* No 47 called "partial agency and control" over the acts of the other, or where such participation has been asserted and judicially confirmed. Hence, conflicting claims about the limits of authority arise in relation to the appropriation and spending of money, on the question of powers of appointment and removal, foreign affairs, the use of the armed forces, the control of regulatory and agency action and the legislative process itself (given the veto and override powers of President and Congress).

In some areas the trend seems to have been towards a curtailment of presidential authority. The President's power of removal, for example, has narrowed where Congressional authority to create offices and attach conditions to their tenure has been upheld by the Courts, especially in cases where office holders have exercised adjudicatory or investigatory functions. The Congressional reaction to the sacking of Professor Archibald Cox as special prosecutor during the Watergate crisis, for example, was a signal defeat for an uncurtailed presidential prerogative. In others areas, as for example in the ability to implement executive policy by presidential proclamations, Presidential power has been, with occasional setbacks, acknowledged and extended.

Wider powers of presidential or administrative rule-making are perhaps an instance less of conflict than of simultaneous judicial extension of both legislative and executive authority. The pure Lockelan milk of the separation of powers doctrine holds that legislative power cannot be delegated at all. Congress holding power from the people must hold it fast and not pass it on into any other hands. *Delegatus non potest delegare*. Since the 1930s the Supreme Court's attitude has been to uphold this doctrine firmly by concluding that since Congress cannot delegate legislative powers to the President or the executive agencies, any powers that it cares to delegate cannot be legislative powers. In another idiom this might be called playing the advantage rule. It keeps the game flowing.

Sometimes, of course, Congress may dispute a presidential claim to be acting under or within the terms of its legislation. President Kennedy in 1961 financed the Peace Corps by using contingency funds made available by the Mutual Security Act, and Richard Nixon's executive order in 1971 extending the activities of the Subversive Activities Control Board was disputed by his Congressional opponents as being an attempt to alter without authority the form of the Congressional legislation under which he was purporting to act.

In each of these main areas of discord (including the War Power, Treaties, appropriations and the legislative veto) the author gives a succinct sketch of the history and current state of play in President-Congressional conflicts largely as they have been clarified (or sometimes not) by the arbitration of the judicial branch. Students of American government will find here an excellent guide to the central dilemmas of American policy-making.

Not everyone, perhaps, would concur in the concluding summary of the Supreme Court's attitude to the separation of powers. This suggests that over the past decade the Court has moved away from a functional and practical approach to separated powers and adopted a doctrinal or formalistic model. This judgment, like any other framed in such terms, should be cautiously viewed and swallowed, if at all, with a pinch of salt. Anyone who accuses the Court of deserting a functional for a formal approach usually means that its decisions have failed to promote functions he approves of. It is said, for example, that in 1974 in *US* v *Nixon* the Court kept to the functional approach in rejecting the President's claims about the scope of executive privilege and emphasized the need for a workable government. No doubt, though, Richard Nixon felt that his need for a workable government in accordance with the functional approach had been judicially ignored. Three years later, the Court in *Nixon* v *Administrator of General Services* (involving the President's control of his papers) again favoured a "pragmatic flexible" approach to Congressional authority, viewing it "in practical terms".

However, in 1983, practicality, pragmatism, flexibility and functionalism are said to have been thrown to the wind in the celebrated and epoch-breaking case *I.N.S.* v *Chadha* in which the Supreme Court held unconstitutional the frequently asserted Congressional power to exercise a legislative veto over executive action (as exemplified in the War Powers Act of 1973 and the Impoundment Control Act of 1974). But it might be argued that the *Chadha* decision if wrong was so not because it was formal rather than functional but because it was not formal enough. The legislative veto can be viewed in many ways – as being, for example, a form of conditional legislation, or as a way in which the legislature delegates powers to one of its elements. Article One of the United States Constitution helps to fog the distinction between the legislature and its elements by vesting legislative power in Congress defined as the Senate and House of Representatives but also providing that legislation cannot take place without the participation of the President. It may be that in *Chadha* the majority of the Court did not sufficiently analyse the character of parent acts and subordinate progeny or draw lines between legislative vetoes on adjudicatory, administrative or rule-making activities, or consider (as Mr Justice Powell did) that the particular Congressional reversal of an adjudicatory decision might have been objectionable simply as a legislative invasion of the judicial function, contrary to the separation of powers. That might be a formal argument, but formal arguments are only wrong if they are the wrong formal arguments.

The camera-ready candidates

Gillian Peele

KATHLEEN HALL JAMIESON
Packaging the Presidency: A history and criticism of presidential campaign advertising
505pp. Oxford University Press. £19.50.
0 19 503504 6

All candidates for office understand that "it ain't what you say, it's the way that you say it" and most are aware of how a political message can be distorted by those who control the instruments of communication. Few countries have experienced as extensive a take-over of politics by marketing men as the United States. There, political strategy is shaped by consultants who purport to combine their communications skills with political arts, and the personalities and policies of candidates are adapted according to whether they will sell. The presidency has been severely affected by these developments. Despite a constitution framed to avoid the excesses of monarchical rule, the American executive has become a highly personalized institution; reforms designed to democratize the electoral process and to constrain the role of money seem to have delivered the conduct of elections to a host of media advisers.

Kathleen Hall Jamieson's book chronicles the changing role of advertising in American politics. The way such factors as the perceived strengths and weaknesses of candidates, cost and campaign finance regulation, the public mood and even the aesthetics of the media consultant have interacted since 1945 can be traced "through the optic of presidential advertising". What can also be traced is the extent to which the culture of successful salesmanship can transform the lofty ideals of Philadelphia to fit the requirements of Madison Avenue.

Political culture, not technology, is the key to understanding what has occurred in the United States. Although radio and television have had a profound impact on American political life, their impact would not have been so great had there not been subtle changes in attitudes towards campaigning generally. Before the New Deal much that modern presidential candidates do would have been thought degrading. (Thus William McKinley delegated the nastier aspects of campaigning to Mark Hanna, preferring to rock on his porch in Canton, Ohio. And Harding's death, like Wilson's stroke, was attributed to over-indulgence in flesh-pressing – a fate which the National Broadcasters Association thought radio might spare Coolidge.) However, attempts to impose seemliness on American politics had to struggle with a more robust American tradition which revelled in personality and made direct appeals to the people in a style which blended politics and entertainment. Thus Andrew Jackson's supporters gleefully used his "Old Hickory" image to electoral advantage and William Henry Harrison used his opponents' jibe that he would be content in a log cabin with a jug of cider, to transform himself into a rather more populist candidate than his two-thousand-acre estate warranted. William Jennings Bryan's challenge to McKinley was launched in 1896 from Madison Square Gardens.

Radio came at the end of a period when populist and progressive notions had killed any idea of politics as an activity reserved to an élite. Thereafter mastery of advertising techniques became an essential component of presidential politics. The insidious potential of new forms of communication in less scrupulous hands could already be discerned as much in Franklin Roosevelt's use of the radio as in the ravings of Father Coughlin. However, it was the advent of television which elevated political packaging to a high art.

Richard Nixon's history is a curious embodiment of the problems associated with the role of the media. Saved by the "Checkers" speech, Nixon demonstrated the power of a single television shot to alter political events. Yet he failed in the presidential debates of 1960 because by comparison with Kennedy he looked pale and shifty. The importance of television image as opposed to content was underlined by the finding that of those who saw the debates on television a majority thought Kennedy had won, while of those who heard them on radio a majority thought Nixon had won. Watergate and the televised replays of the impeachment hearings also showed the extent to which television, advertising men and the political process were intertwined, as well as proving that on occasion the American public could reject shoddy political goods however brilliantly wrapped.

Professor Jamieson describes with enthusiasm the selection of the themes in campaigns, and the problems attached to managing candidates, although she occasionally slips into syntax so sticky as to be worthy of Eisenhower. Thus on Goldwater's difficulties with the social security issue she comments that the "Democratic inference that making it (ie, social security) voluntary constitutes a drastic change in the system does not sanction putting that inference in Goldwater's mouth". However, the concentration on the detail of image presentation has caused her to neglect sustained analysis of the wider questions about the political system. Although she mentions that the half-hour candidate television advertisements have been replaced by the more popular short "spot" advertisements, she does not really explore the implications of this for the handling of issues. Nor does she link her themes with other developments in television such as the increasing preference for news over current affairs analysis.

The party system is hardly mentioned although clearly the absence of ideologically coherent parties has contributed substantially to the vacuum which media advisers have filled. The image of the Republican Party and that of Ike merged to the former's advantage at first; but neglect of the party's grass roots underlined the danger of over-reliance on a candidate's personal popularity. The recent revival of Republican fortunes is founded on firmer ground, owing much to hard organizational work and to more general intellectual trends. Yet it also benefited from Reagan's skill as a performer. As Professor Jamieson notes, the "nice guy" was a role he had played for a long time; the image softened the harder edges of the new Republican creed. In addition to this personal advantage which they enjoyed over the Democrats in 1980, the Republicans used the media differently. They were more professional about testing their advertisements. What is not clear however, is whether this difference was a fluke or another manifestation of superior Republican strategy.

Similarly, Jamieson gives little indication of the impact of campaign tactics in the White House. Nor does she discuss extensively the marketing concepts and the technological constraints of advertising. This she might have done had she written more about advertising generally, including such specialized aspects of it as direct mail. Indeed, the absence of discussion of direct mail is a weakness in a book which purports to be about all political advertising and not just television.

Nevertheless for those who want a straightforward starting-point for studying the effect of television and political advertising on the style of American politics, Professor Jamieson's study will prove highly useful. But what would George Washington have made of Gerald Rafshoon?

Part 2 of the National Inventory of Documentary Sources in the United States, a five-part microfiche project published by Chadwyck-Healey (Cambridge) has recently been completed. Part 1, "Federal Records," brought together the records of federal agencies in the Smithsonian and Presidential Libraries. Part 2, "Manuscript Division, Library of Congress," promises a new form of access to "the most important repository in North America". It contains registers of 772 collections in the library, each with a "scope note" providing a detailed description of the collection, plus a listing of its boxes and folders. This, say the publishers, will "bridge the gap between the brief entry for each collection in the *National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections* and the collections themselves". "Manuscript Division" consists of 900 silver positive microfiche in three storage binders with a printed clothbound index, and costs $2,750.

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In the Ruskin archive

Tim Hilton

To a native of the Isle of Wight, the retired person who has come to live in his village is known as a "When-I", from a characteristic conversational turn ("When I was in India/the Foreign Office/the City, . . ." etc); and indeed there is something about the island, quite apart from its hospitality to the venerable, that prompts reminiscence – a general old-fashionedness nicely announced, on disembarking from the Portsmouth boat, by the antiquated tube train that takes one from Ryde Pier Head to the Esplanade, and thence, with many a glimpse of Victorian villas in gardens of palm and fuschia, skirting hills and crossing sunken lanes, to the south-eastern coast, beloved of holiday-makers who would not dream of venturing abroad. Here, a little to the east of Ventnor, Shanklin and the much less elegant Sandown, on the crumbling cliffs below Culver Down, is Bembridge School, the home of the Ruskin Galleries: the largest private archive, I dare say, of the papers of any significant nineteenth-century English writer.

The Ruskin collections are themselves preserved in a period setting. The galleries housing the manuscripts, books and drawings resemble those carefully reconstructed rooms of former times that one occasionally finds in museums. Built in the 1930s, and not altered since then, they belong to the last days of the arts and crafts revival. The designer of the various school buildings at Bembridge was William Alexander Harvey (1875–1951), an architect of no especial fame, though he has a place in the garden cities movement. For that reason he is best known in his native Birmingham, where his practice was responsible for the model village of Bournville. John Howard Whitehouse, the founder of Bembridge School, was also a Birmingham man: he was born there in 1873. In 1896 he was the secretary of the Birmingham Ruskin Society and the editor of its journal *St George*. In 1903 he moved to Scotland and eventually became Liberal MP for Mid-Lanark, which he represented from 1910 to 1918. When he left active politics to found a progressive boarding-school at Bembridge it was natural that his former colleagues should send their children to be under his charge; and the school retained a connection with parliamentary Liberalism until very recently.

Bembridge School and his pupils were to be the main work of Whitehouse's life. But he was more proud of his association with Ruskin than of any educational endeavour. Whitehouse was one of the youngest men to have met Ruskin, for he visited Brantwood, his home, in the year before Ruskin's death, 1899. On this occasion he presented him with an illuminated "national address" prepared by the various Ruskin Societies to honour his eightieth birthday. Whitehouse's diary, which is preserved at Bembridge, records how, as he entered Ruskin's bedroom,

> he attempted to rise, but was evidently too feeble to do so . . . I then explained that we had brought him a National Address, and I read it to him. As I was doing so, I occasionally heard him give a low exclamation – half sob it seemed to be. When I finished he tried to reply but could utter only a few broken words . . .

Whitehouse was much moved by this encounter. In the next year he attended Ruskin's funeral, and listened with interest to the indiscreet conversation of George Allen, who had been in Ruskin's service as factotum and publisher for forty years: those years, in fact, that are not related in *Praeterita*, Ruskin's autobiography. It was probably at this time that Whitehouse realized how much of Ruskin's own life there was to collect and preserve. But since Brantwood and its contents now became the property of Joan and Arthur Severn – Ruskin's cousin and her husband – his acquisition of primary material had to wait for a few more years.

Joan Severn died in 1924, Arthur in 1930. They had sold most of the more obviously valuable of the contents of Brantwood, the Turners, gems and missals. There remained an immense and miscellaneous collection of manuscript material, drawings and printed books. In 1930 and 1931 five sales at Sotheby's, and two at Brantwood and Warwick Square, the Severns' London home, dispersed these very cheap treasures. Whitehouse's purchases at the sales are the core of the Bembridge holdings. At the first of them he bought Ruskin's diaries, which record his life from 1835 to 1889, working papers and notebooks for *The Stones of Venice*, manuscripts of Ruskin's 1878 notes on his own Turner drawings and of *The Art of England*, *Love's Meinie* and *The Eagle's Nest* (these are Oxford lecture series), together with a number of fragments and twenty books from the Brantwood library. At the Sotheby's sale of May 1931 he acquired, among other things, packages containing letters between Ruskin's parents, letters to Ruskin from his father, and three large parcels of letters from Ruskin to Joan Severn. These last were written daily (and sometimes twice or thrice daily) whenever Ruskin was apart from his cousin, and date from 1864, when Joan came to live in the Ruskin household, to his final collapse in Paris in 1888. They provide the fullest and most illuminating record of his later life, but remain largely unpublished.

Whitehouse continued to purchase Ruskin material after these dispersal sales and in 1932 bought Brantwood itself: thus it now belongs to the same trust that administers the Bembridge holdings. The collection on the Isle of

Ruskin's pencil and watercolour portrait of Rose La Touche which is in the Guild of St George Collection at the Ruskin Gallery, Sheffield.

Wight grew until Whitehouse's death in 1955, and has been augmented by many purchases and bequests since then. But the store of Ruskin material was simply not studied while Whitehouse lived. His real interest was in watercolours. There are some 600 Ruskin drawings at Bembridge, with 200 by associated artists, and another 200 at Brantwood. Whitehouse made some lists of these sheets, and framed the best of them. But the manuscripts remained unsorted, uncatalogued and largely unread. A rather dispiriting record of this situation is to be found in the Clarendon Press edition of Ruskin's diaries, issued between 1956 and 1959. The published version gives only half of the complete text and its annotation is thin, random and inaccurate. This is because Whitehouse's co-editor, the late Joan Evans, was lost without the rest of the Bembridge collection, which she did not consult. Modern Ruskin scholarship was not possible before James Dearden took charge of the Galleries in 1957. He then found that there were numerous packets of letters that had not been opened since Whitehouse bought them. Many of these letters had previously been withheld from Ruskin's literary executors and from E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, the editors of the monumental Library Edition (1903–12) of Ruskin's complete works. Now that the Bembridge holdings are completely catalogued it is possible to relate Ruskin's 250 published titles to the daily events of his life, a project which Cook and Wedderburn were unwilling or unable to undertake. This is what I do.

It takes about a year to become familiar with all the unpublished material at Bembridge. Here is a problem, but the resourceful modern Ruskinian will find a help in the development of the Isle of Wight's holiday industry. Busy with his other avocations, Whitehouse had neglected to buy the fields to the west of his school. All the way to the cliff-tops these formerly quiet pastures are now filled with caravans and chalets, arranged in roughly concentric circles that seem to bear down upon, or perhaps radiate from, a supermarket, a bingo hall, a launderette and an adequately appointed clubhouse. What more does a scholar need, when at the end of the day he lifts his eyes from pages scrawled with the Victorian life-blood, ink? In Chalet Siesta and Chalet Gull's Nest I lived for months. It was magic: neither by day nor by night was I in the real world, and what I read in the daytime was crazier than a dream. In the Culver Club bar you can sing "My Way" until closing-time, then (careful on the cliff paths) run home through the caravans, sleep – almost – *à la belle étoile*, swim before breakfast, listen to French radio on the tranny and swim again in your lunch-hour before another long session with Ruskin's correspondence, or his analysis of Greek iconography, to be found in his diaries, or with the unpublishable parts of *Praeterita*. You need a healthy head for this kind of research: at no point after 1860 was Ruskin a happy man, and it is especially painful to uncover the truth about his life after 1875, when Rose La Touche died, and he became subject to the ten years of madnesses that finally broke him.

Many sequences of letters at Bembridge help one to understand how Ruskin developed the unique display of temperament that helps to make *Fors Clavigera* his masterpiece. Such letters are not necessarily addressed to loved ones or significant public figures. His exchanges with Carlyle, Froude and the like are certainly important, but letters to schoolgirls, booksellers or local clergymen can be just as revealing. Ruskin also wrote with great frankness to people he hardly knew, and for this reason the intimacy between his life and his public writing is often demonstrated in letters to unlikely correspondents. This is most the case in Ruskin's *Fors* period, between 1871 and 1884. These are also the years of his Oxford Professorship; and the ninety-six issues of *Fors*, which at times incorporate Ruskin's private correspondence, tend to mingle with his lectures, which supposedly were more official pronouncements. Such complicated matters become clearer with the assistance of the Bembridge collections. The various archives of the Ruskin Galleries also help us to understand the composition of *Praeterita*. When he finally resigned the Slade Chair and began his autobiography Ruskin looked to old letters and diaries to stimulate his memories, and the first plans and drafts of the book are actually written in his diaries. But Ruskin did not always use the material one would expect. He did not refer, for instance, to the touching correspondence between his parents, though his book is often written as a celebration of their marriage. And, since the narrative of *Praeterita* did not reach the point at which he began to write his 3,000 letters to Joan Severn, their wealth of reminiscence is also ignored. Future studies of Ruskin's work will have to take all this into account.

Chalet life has a different character in the winter months. After the blackberry season and a week or two of mushroom time there are shutters on the ice-cream kiosk, the bus no longer calls, the club and the supermarket close. Somewhere, far away, the academic year is beginning, and an alsatian now roams this holiday campus to keep out intruders (me). It does not often snow on the island, but on Culver Cliff sea winds bluster through your slats and creosoted crevices. After October the Isle of Wight population is reduced by half; and then – it is a Ruskinian duty to say this – a veneer is removed and England appears as now she is, meaner, without connections. On Saturday mornings in one pub on Ryde Esplanade there is a group of alarming women (to a person who is in town to change his library books): they are off the boat and getting liquored up before visiting hours at the prisons at Parkhurst and Albany. One When-I, by trade an electrician, told me how to make an electric chair, as he had done in Japan in the last months of the Second World War. All When-I people, including I suppose myself, tell you things you do not wish to know, and certainly their views are not going to be changed by the conversation of some young book-review wallah. But in two shakes of a lamb's tail it is possible to prove

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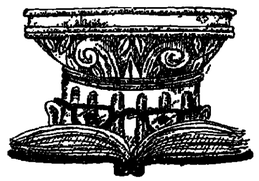

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Letters

'1945'

Sir, – "Nevertheless, there may be something slightly unseemly about actually celebrating the acceptance of so unpleasant a necessity." David Carlton, in his review of Robert Kee's *1945: The world we fought for* (May 17), refers to the celebrations to mark the defeat of Nazi Germany – only for him, 1945 marks the betrayal of Poland and the triumph of Soviet brutality.

Well, that is one way of looking at it. But what I wish to correct is Carlton's assumption that his is a plucky little voice calling out this harsh truth in the face of mass ignorance and indifference. For the past few years – in particular since the present American and British governments came into being – those who attack Yalta and dream of sterner American action then (as Carlton wistfully remarks, they had an atomic monopoly) have become a mighty and persistent chorus. It is the new orthodoxy. Unregenerate students who continue to suppose Hitler's fascism was more pernicious to the world than Stalin's communism are rapidly moving into the minority camp.

Realization of his non-beleaguered status might moderate Carlton's sense of heroic mission; it might even cause him to jettison the herd and examine once again who precisely was the enemy in the Second World War and how he was to be defeated.

MICHAEL MacCARTHY-MORROGH.
44 Bishops Road, Fulham, London SW6.

'The Tale of Calil'

Sir, – Reading the fascinating Byronic fragment in your issue of May 17, I was immediately struck by the resemblance in both style (especially the use of irony) and subject-matter to the early chapters of Beckford's *Vathek*, which the poet had praised in his notes to *The Gaiour* in 1813. Byron probably first read Beckford's oriental novel about 1809, and he later told Beckford's daughter the Duchess of Hamilton that he regarded it as his "gospel". He also told her that he always carried a copy of the book in his pocket, so it probably escaped the seizure of his other books mentioned by Leslie A. Marchand. A little after the date of the fragment Byron formed a link with Beckford through Samuel Rogers, who visited Fonthill Abbey in 1817. Rogers, at Byron's request, tried to persuade Beckford to let the poet see the "Episodes" to *Vathek*, then, and for many years afterwards, to remain in manuscript, but Beckford refused. There is much in "The Tale of Calil" to suggest that Byron had something longer in mind. Did he perhaps intend to write a Vathek-like story of his own, but later gave up the attempt?

BRIAN FOTHERGILL.
7 Union Square, London N1.

Sir, – In the transcript of Lord Byron's newly published prose satire (May 17) the undeciphered word rendered as "podeldoc?" is, may I suggest, "opodeldoc". That part of the sentence would then read "rubbing his sinciput with a balsam (an opodeldoc had not yet been compounded and exported)". This would make sense, as "opodeldoc" was the name given in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to various soap-based liniments containing camphor, rosemary oil and sometimes ammonia. The word derives from the name Paracelsus gave his plasters, which would link up with the unwelcome "plaister" – the sabre blow – which created Calil's need for a balsam, and introduce a suggestion of quackery consistent with Byron's satiric tone.

NORA CROOK.
20 Defreville Avenue, Cambridge.

Sir, – The illegible balsam in Byron's tale will have been opodeldoc. This name was probably coined by Paracelsus to describe a colophony plaster, only a century or so after Calil's time. To Byron, however, it was camphorated soap liniment, a household remedy. The *OED* gives quotations from Scott's journals and *Tom Brown's Schooldays*.

Perhaps what Calil really used was the Balm of Mecca that Lady Mary Wortley Montagu regretted trying. She tells the story to Lady ——— in her letter of June 17, 1717.

BRIAN WOODS.
20 Cornbury Road, Canons Park, Edgware, Middlesex.

London Bookshops

Sir, – From time to time the columns of newspapers and journals such as your own report the difficulties faced by publishers in selling books. But does anyone, I wonder, share my difficulties in buying them? On April 19 of this year you printed a review of *The Reign of Elizabeth I* edited by Christopher Haigh and published by Macmillan as the latest addition to their admirable Problems in Focus series. Since this is a topic that interests me, and the review was on the whole favourable, I determined to buy the book.

I began by asking for it at Waterstone's in Kensington High Street, but was there informed that it was an old book, of which the review had appeared late, and that they therefore did not have it. (It was in fact published on January 11 this year.) They offered to get it for me, but warned that, being Macmillan's, it would take at least a month. Rather than wait this length of time I took myself off to Dillon's, but the sadly depleted shelves in their Tudor and Stuart section contained no copy of the Haigh, nor, when I enquired, did they have one available. They recommended that I should try Foyles, which I did, but Foyles likewise had no copy. At Foyles' suggestion I then went into Collet's bookshop, but they had not heard of the Haigh volume. However, they courteously directed me to the nearby branch of Waterstone's, which had heard of it, but did not have a copy. I then made my way, somewhat disconsolately, to Hatchard's, but their shelves were innocent of the Haigh book, as were those of Truslove and Hanson, my next port of call. On my way home, by now exhausted as well as dejected, I looked in on my excellent local bookshop, but although they said it was the sort of book they would normally stock, they did not actually have a copy. I therefore returned home empty-handed.

My intention in writing this letter is not to attack either the publishers or the booksellers. Indeed, I should emphasize that in every bookshop I visited I was treated most considerately, and it was always made plain that, as long as I was prepared to wait, I could order the book. But I remain baffled by the fact that in this capital city it is apparently impossible to buy a new book from a well-known publisher on a main-line topic. Is there perhaps some secret network, some black-market source of supply of which I am unaware? If so, I should welcome enlightenment.

ROGER LOCKYER.
3 Pembridge Place, London W2.

'By Way of Sainte-Beuve'

Sir, – I think it should be pointed out that the Hogarth Press's edition of Proust's *By Way of Sainte-Beuve*, published in 1984, is not what it says it is on the imprint page, which states: First published in Great Britain by Chatto & Windus 1958 / Hogarth edition offset from the original Chatto edition.

From this it would seem reasonable to assume that the 1984 edition would include all the material between the covers of the 1958 edition. This, however, is far from the case. The excisions in the new volume include all the material under the heading "Miscellaneous Writings" in the original edition, which runs to 320 pages as opposed to 216. This should surely have been made clear in the blurb and on the imprint page of this new "edition".

NICHOLAS JACOBS.
10 Burghley Road, London NW5.

'The Nabokov–Wilson Letters'

Sir, – In his "American Notes" (April 12), Christopher Hitchens announces the publication of "a memoir written by a Ukrainian paedophile before the First World War". He then states, as if it were a new discovery, that this publication will elucidate "an entry in the correspondence between Edmund Wilson and Vladimir Nabokov", an entry which "has always been slightly opaque". But the very words Hitchens cites from Edmund Wilson's letter to Nabokov of June 1, 1948 ("Havelock Ellis's Russian sex masterpiece"), are followed in the text of this correspondence, which I had the pleasure of editing and annotating, by a lengthy footnote that takes up most of pages 201–2 of *The Nabokov–Wilson Letters*.

In that note, I explained that although Havelock Ellis was unable to publish the memoir in question in England, he appended it to the sixth volume of the French edition of his collected writings (*Etudes de Psychologie Sexuelle*, VI, Paris, 1926). This was the book that Wilson had shared with Nabokov. I also quoted in that note a reference to the Ukrainian paedophile's memoir in the Russian version to Nabokov's autobiography, *Drugie berega*, and wrote a whole paragraph about the connection between Nabokov's reading of Havelock Ellis's volume and the genesis of *Lolita*.

Since Christopher Hitchens cites both Wilson and Nabokov from my edition of their letters, it is incomprehensible why he thought that the Ukrainian's memoir was hitherto unpublished or unavailable or that Nabokov's reference to it was a possible example of "Nabokov's twitting of the over-solemn Wilson".

SIMON KARLINSKY.
University of California, Berkeley, California 94720.

Modest Proposals

Sir, – Your reviewers of the *Oeuvres complètes* of Belle de Zuylen (Isabelle de Charrière) (May 17) are mistaken when they state that James Boswell did not propose to her. In fact, he proposed to her twice. The first proposal, addressed to her father from Paris on January 16, 1766, is the highlight of the whole affair. Boswell was extremely proud of this lengthy epistle (twenty-six quarto pages in French) and, at his own request, it was later returned to him so that he could preserve it as a record of his feelings at the time. His second proposal can be found in a letter he addressed to Belle herself from Edinburgh on February 26, 1768. The relevant documents are published in Volume Two of the *Private Papers of James Boswell* (Mount Vernon, 1929) and in *Boswell in Holland* (New York and London, 1952); the letter of February 26, 1768, is included in the *Oeuvres complètes*.

C. P. COURTNEY.
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'As You Like It'

Sir, – In his review of the Royal Shakespeare Company's production of *As You Like It* (Commentary, May 3), Eric Sams is correct in his opening remark, "As its throwaway title tells us, this idyllic play presents no real problems", but only if the label is indeed taken as "throwaway". But would our greatest poet have been content with such a designation? None of his other titles seems that way (even *All's Well That Ends Well* conveys its Machiavellian overtones). As I have indicated in my article in *Shakespeare Survey* (1974), *Much Ado About Nothing* was very likely a subtitle (at best an alternative title).

The meaning of *As You Like It* should not be loosely equated with that of the subtitle for *Twelfth Night*, namely *What You Will*. The author expressly informs us that he meant the former comedy to represent what his audience wanted; that is what the designation means. The evidence for this aside is in Rosalind's Epilogue; she bids the spectators to like only "as much of this play as please you". Surely this phrase was meant to echo the significance of the title, rounding the piece out. For actors to assume that the title implies that they are at liberty to do what they want with Shakespeare is perilous.

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A. J. Balfour

Sir, – At the risk of exhibiting what is popularly supposed to be a reprehensible feature of the schoolmasterly mentality, may I assume that the "1905 election" mentioned by John Turner in his review of Ruddock F. Mackay's *Balfour* (May 3) is in fact the 1906 general election?

J. WIGLEY.
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Basil Blackwell

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284 pages, paperback £7.50 (0 631 13718 1)

COMMENTARY

The landscape of exile

Claude Rawson

Edward Lear, 1812–1888
Royal Academy, until July 14

Edward Lear, the cheery Nonsense poet, was really very sad. Loneliness and exile are the themes of his poems. His characters are almost always excluded from the world by some tragicomic infirmity. Uncle Arly's "shoes were far too tight", for example, and Daddy Long-legs and the Fly, whose legs are respectively too long and too short, sail away to "the great Gromboolian plain", a never-never land where all alone "they play for evermore./ At battlecock and shuttledore". On the same Gromboolian plain, the Dong wanders vainly on his love-lorn quest for the Jumbly Girl. The Yonghy-Bonghy-Bò, a proto-Prufrock who (unlike Prufrock and Lear himself) actually did pop the question, is also refused and never comes back. Even requited love, like the Owl's and the Pussycat's, fulfils itself in exile. And when, "hand in hand, on the edge of the sand,/ They danced by the light of the moon", they did so with a "marginality" so literal that Lear might almost have been punning *avant la lettre* on the sociologist's jargon.

These themes of exile don't usually appear in Lear's limericks. The brevity of the form is not suited to that special sadness, which requires a more lingering orchestration in extended plot and elaborate pindarick stanza. The same situations in limerick form risk turning more brutal than is natural to Lear's manner. One example, about "an old man whose despair / Induced him to purchase a hare", uses the pay-off line to suggest an exile that is consoling rather than catastrophic:

> Whereon one fine day, he rode wholly away,
> Which partly assuaged his despair.

This benignly betrays expectation, if we expect pay-offs to be "ruthless", as they sometimes are:

> There was an Old Person of Buda,
> Whose conduct grew ruder and ruder;
> Till at last, with a hammer, they silenced his clamour,
> By smashing that Person of Buda.

This particular limerick is one of a small group in which, exceptionally, the ruthlessness occurs in, or survives into, the last line: the group includes the person of Cadiz who drowned, and the person of Florence who choked. More often in Lear, last lines act as a neutralizing restatement of the first, softening disaster by a return to the familiar. They may even announce a happy restoration. Thus the Old Person of Prague ends up *cured* of the plague, while the Man of Nepaul (*sic*) who fell from his horse and was "split quite in two" is mended "by some very strong glue", like those severed heroes in the *Battle of the Books* or the *Rape of the Lock*, who "soon unite again".

One therefore sees what Sir Steven Runciman means when he says, in an essay in the catalogue of the exhibition at the Royal Academy, that Lear is "often ruthless in a form that children enjoy", but the ruthlessness is of a sort that quickly turns benign. Lear is usually free of the sentimental-moralistic prurience which sometimes attaches to "cruel" fables written by adults, whether in a "cautionary" spirit or from some state of grown-up whimsy, fondly indulging an arrested development in the belief that it gives them privileged access to the infant mind. But he is equally remote from those unmediated products of the child imagination recorded by the Opies from streets and playgrounds, with their choppings and boilings and hangings, their Ubuesque displays of macabre exuberance, their rhyming curses and disgusting gastronomic litanies:

> Slab a pab of custard, green dog eye,
> All mixed together with a dead cat's eye,
> Slap it on thick,
> Then swill it down with a cup of cold sick.

Such raw emanations of our younger selves easily outdo the grimmest set-pieces of obscene eating in Swift or Flaubert, and Lear hardly enters the competition. His genial impulse to domesticate the unsavoury operates here as in other departments: the person of Bromley ate "spiders and crust", and the Stork family in the prose "History of the Seven Families of the Lake Pipple-Popple" ate "frogs for breakfast and buttered toast for tea". The "History" is a story of animal families partially transposed to a human key and it enjoys a kind of split-level "realism", the frogs and buttered toast acting as a suitably syncretic diet. "Buttered toast for tea" has a lip-smacking cheeriness which some children's books thrive on and which elsewhere risks imputations of vulgar smugness: it is what Fielding mocked Richardson for when Shamela and Mrs Jewkes "supped together upon a hot buttered Apple-Pie".

"The History of the Seven Families" is a tale of multiple disasters. Each episode ends with its own brutal pay-off, in a sequence whose stylish symmetries partly deflect attention from all the horror. Moreover, the accumulation is so relentlessly mechanical that it virtually announces itself as going over the top. It contains the seed of its own disarming, much as invectives and curses (often deliberately) undermine themselves by their own excess. Though a prose story, it reads like a bravura series of horror limericks, of precisely the "cruel" kind which Lear seldom wrote singly. He preferred to make disaster improbably multiply, thus also dissipating and softening the impact, just as he liked it to modulate into the softer pathos of the longer poems. "Mr and Mrs Discobbolos" combines both features: it is the story of a family of fourteen people (again neatly patterned, father, mother, six boys, six girls) and told in the charmingly elaborate stanzas which are Lear's most engaging style. The family have lived on a wall for twenty years and, now that the children are marriageable, Mrs Discobbolos suggests returning to the real world. Mr Discobbolos thinks this a fate worse than death and, with aid of dynamite, opts for the lesser evil:

> And all the Discobbolos family flew
> In thousands of bits to the sky so blue.

Persons living on walls or pillars were one of Lear's themes, doubtless fraught with Freudian possibilities. His first *Book of Nonsense* (1846) had a limerick about

> . . . an Old Man of the Coast,
> Who placidly sat on a post;
> But when it was cold, he relinquished his hold,
> And called for some hot buttered toast.

The drawing shows a fat smiling man with a pipe: a genial antithesis to St Simeon Stylites, who spent even longer on his pillar than the Discobbolos family, and who had recently been the subject of a dramatic monologue by Lear's future friend Tennyson. Lear's imagination would not have had much room for the saint's penitential intensities, or for the macabre humour with which Tennyson is said to have read them aloud. His limerick is once again domesticated with the aid of "hot buttered toast", a flash of surreal inconsequence which resettles rather than unsettles the reader by its genial unexpectedness.

Later in life, Lear once punningly compared himself with the old saint: "I am beginning to do like old Simon [*sic*] Stylites - i.e. to live 'on my Capital'". But it is the iconographic idea and its potential for surreal fantasy that tickled his imagination. In the drawing, the Old Man of the Coast is portrayed so closely attached to his post as to seem a part or extension of it. There are limericks and drawings about persons in or on trees, whose tendency is to merge with the object on which they rest. The "Nonsense Botany" of 1871 includes Phattfacia Stupenda, a large face growing out of a vegetable stalk, and Manypeeplia Upsidownia, with Lilliputian creatures hanging down from an arching stem. There are also vegetable piglets, fish, birds, insects and a surrealist bric-à-brac of guitars, combs, spoons and forks, all on the end of stalks.

"Village with hilltop ruin", an ink and watercolour sketch by Edward Lear made in Italy in 1838. From the exhibition reviewed here.

He delighted in images of things growing incongruously out of alien organisms, noses turning into tassels or trumpets, pointed enough to play the harp, long enough for birds to perch on or horizontal enough to carry a lamp. He would have enjoyed Magritte's "Lamp philosophique", where the man's nose curves right into the pipe he is smoking, or those Magritte faces from which an apple or a bird seem to spring fully formed. But Lear's sketches have a good-humoured scattiness very remote from the hard "photographic" finish, the aggressively eerie stylishness of Magritte. Lear's man with the trumpet nose, like his human bodies with animal heads, have older analogues in the satanic universe of Bosch, as well as in traditions of caricature which themselves look forward to the Surrealists. But he is as free of guilt-ridden satanism or satirical malice as he is of modernist *Angst*. His peculiar sadness is his own.

One source of this sadness was his failure to be recognized as a serious artist, and he would have lamented the fact that to this day it is only for his Nonsense that he has been taken seriously. There were other, more secret, sources, now well understood. His epilepsy (twenty fits a month, marked in his diaries with little crosses, poignant signals which are a world away from the vacuous automatism of Boswell's better-known diary shorthand), and his homosexuality, made him feel cut off even in his closest friendships, and made marriage, which he partly craved, too difficult to take on. He was immensely lovable, and had a deep capacity for friendship. He achieved social success and was befriended (as well as patronized, in both senses) by the highly placed. His closest literary friend was Tennyson, who wrote a poem for him (which Lear parodied) and whose poems he illustrated and set to music; that friendship, like some others, came to Lear *de haut en bas* and caused him pain, though he felt unmixed adoration for Tennyson's wife.

The perpetual travel and exile were outward manifestations of the deep inner loneliness. His lack of success as an artist was doubtless bound up with this, and certainly compounded it. He was extraordinarily gifted. His minor gift was as a musician: his settings of Tennyson's and of his own poems were the most attractive feature of the recent BBC television programme about him. His earliest pictorial works, displayed in this splendid exhibition, are the remarkable naturalist drawings, composed in his teens. His book of parrots was published when he was nineteen, and his birds were compared with Audubon's. His European travels in the 1830s produced some delightful sketches: the views of the Castle of Elz, and of Amalfi, combine a naturalist's precision with an element of gothick fantasy and a touch of the caricaturist's calculated indiscipline of line. Queen Victoria so admired one of his travel-books that she asked to take drawing-lessons from him.

But his ambition was to be a great landscape painter. His letters and journals are full of his attempts to get his paintings accepted by the Academy, and of his disappointment when they were rejected or hung in an unprestigious place. Now there is a whole gallery of them in that same Academy. Many, like the big "Temple of Bassae", seem frozen and indeed Academic. His "Cedars of Lebanon" (which was even bigger and which he considered his most important oil-painting) achieved a sale but is now lost, though a charming watercolour of 1858 survives. Perhaps the best of the surviving oils is the small "Quarries of Syracuse", and there is a fascinating watercolour sketch for it, with handwritten notes: one of the distinctions of the exhibition is the insight it offers into Lear's working methods. Of his North African or Middle Eastern canvases, "Kasr-es-Saad", 1877, inspired by a line of Tennyson, has a bald craggy impressiveness, but most of his Arab landscapes look forward to Hollywood. His Venice is a poor man's Canaletto: he did not like Venice and preferred Canaletto. And there are some failed attempts at the Turnerian sublime. His precision and delicacy went into smaller-scale works, the brilliant zestful caricatures, the hard clear outlines of the naturalist drawings, the more fluid contours of the watercolours. Even what he referred to as the "Tyrants", those mass-produced studio watercolours he turned out for a quick penny, sometimes have a graceful efficiency lacking in the larger oils. Exhibits 39a-d are an interestingly assembled case-history of such work, including a letter describing their rather remarkable method of composition.

The exhibition catalogue (216pp. Royal Academy/Weidenfeld and Nicolson. Paperback, £8.95. 0 297 78636 9) is an imposing work of reference as well as a delightful guide. It contains excellent reproductions and some attractive essays. An extra bonus is a section devoted to "Lear on Art" shows him as a lively art critic. There is a wonderful celebration of Dürer's naturalist drawings, which casts a retrospective glow on Lear's own early work. A comparison of Holman Hunt with Millais to the latter's disadvantage includes a devastating verbal portrait of Mrs Millais, formerly Mrs Ruskin. Of Sir Charles Eastlake, PRA, at the 1854 Exhibition he said: "Sir Charles had a 'Giorgione & water' female head, – more like a piece of boiled veal than a woman".

The catalogue is compiled by Vivien Noakes, whose superb biography of Lear has just been reissued (*Edward Lear*. 304pp. Ariel Books. Paperback, £5.25 0 563 20387 0), presumably as the book of the television programme – to which Mrs Noakes acted as a consultant and which suffered even more than usual from the phoniness of "dramatized" documentaries. Mrs Noakes is also the speaker on the Taped Audio Guide to the Exhibition, which is well worth the extra £1.50. She is the world's most authoritative student of Lear, and the most sensitive. We owe her a great debt for a presentation of Lear which perhaps for the first time gives something like an adequate sense of his rich and many-sided gifts.

The sixth annual summer exhibition at the Christopher Wood Gallery, 15 Montcomb Street, London SW1, *From Manor to Cottage*, will be on the theme of Victorian gardens, flowers and still lifes. The exhibition will include works by G. S. Elgood, Henry Terry, Thomas Tyndale and William Cruikshank.

COMMENTARY

Queening it

Peter Kemp

Mapp and Lucia
Channel 4

Queenly demeanour dominates E. F. Benson's world, as Gerald Savory's dramatization of *Mapp and Lucia* never lets you forget. Characters parade in pageants as Elizabeth I or Mary Queen of Scots. In the Queen Anne interiors of Tilling – Benson's fictional version of Rye – two doyennes wage a battle for social supremacy that is, the author suggests, like "an engagement between two well-equipped Queens".

So shrilly affected are the skirmishings, though, that other connotations of the word "queen" push to the fore. In an atmosphere of chi-chi and theatrical cattiness, ambiguity reigns. Mapp and Lucia, Benson's warring *grandes dames*, can resemble pantomime dames. Travesty is even more evident in Georgie, Lucia's confidant, often to be found bent over his embroidery frame, gossiping and getting in little verbal jabs as he pricks out his *petit point*. Adding to the ambivalence is the boyish figure of "Quaint Irene", a lad-like lesbian painter with an eye for women wrestlers.

Pale shades of Ronald Firbank – who was received into the Catholic Church by Benson's brother – flutter in the distance. But what is referred to as "that horrid thing which Freud calls sex" is kept limply at arm's length. The merest hint of physical intimacy – such as sleeping in adjoining rooms in a hotel – sends Benson's coy neuters into clammy trepidation.

Fleshing out these glandless effigies for the screen and giving some substance to their camp Cranford with its bustle of nosiness and cosiness isn't an enviable task – particularly as the fiction's dialogue is its most resistible feature. Characters tend to converse in an excruciating argot concocted from baby talk and Italian-ese ("Oo very good girl, Lucia. Oo molto punctuale"). Wisely, the television version pares this to a twee minimum. But the director, Donald McWhinnie, then introduces embarrassments of his own – such as facetious music to underscore already loudly farcical scenes. It seems a mistake, too, to have opened what is apparently to be a series of Benson dramatizations with *Mapp and Lucia* – the fourth of a six-book sequence – thus sacrificing such drama and momentum as Benson has managed to achieve.

Consisting of little more than a foible, most of the characters don't afford their actors much scope. Of the three roles offering an opportunity for something more elaborate, two are resourcefully made the most of. As Georgie, the toupée-ed tattler, Nigel Hawthorne is funnily effective. Pr nella Scales, voice oozing with curdled sweetness, excels as Mapp, waddling round like some obese vulture avid for pickings of scandal. The arch failure of the dramatization, though, is Geraldine McEwan as its central figure, Lucia. Giving self-indulgent vent to her increasing propensity to turn each part she plays into an eccentric vocal exercise, she hoots and pipes and honks and squeaks, jumping up and down the octaves from dowager gruffness to little-girl lispings but rarely hitting a convincing note.

Cult and charisma

Rosemary Dinnage

Matter of Heart
Gate Cinema, Bloomsbury

From Thursday, May 16 the Gate Cinema, Bloomsbury is taking the risk of running an hour-and-three-quarters-long film on Carl Gustaf Jung made by a group of American Jungians. The Jung Institute of Los Angeles raised money by subscription and got *Matter of Heart* made by Michael and Mark Whitney. It is made up chiefly of old footage of Jung and of recent interviews with the leading Jungians, including Sir Laurens van der Post. It would be improved by a linking voice-over; information is given out in tiresome chunks of rolling print.

The years were kind to Jung and though he looks like a Teutonic butcher in the early photographs with Freud, he mellows into the archetypal Wise Old Man. Stuffing his pipe and talking out-of-date English slang with a Swiss accent, he comes across as an attractive figure. He had, or acquired, charisma, and it is no wonder that in his prime he was surrounded by an adoring crowd of female patients and followers. "The cultism!" says an American woman therapist who went out to Switzerland for training, but Jung's skills brought her round eventually. A number of the lady Jungians interviewed tell with fond smiles what a bastard he was capable of being. Tantrums exploded around them, and they laughed indulgently.

The film also shows indulgence to the seldom mentioned story of Jung's long affair with an ex-patient, Toni Wolff, who was kept in tandem with his wife, the mother of his five children. Analysts interviewed declare that he owed everything to her and that she was integrated as part of the family. Wasn't it unusual of Emma Jung to tolerate this?, asks an interviewer – and he is told that he has a curious "Anglo-Saxon prejudice". But – "Two wives!" says Jung's grandson; "he should have found out earlier that she was his anima figure."

Jung attained the position he did – there are Jungian associations all over the world, though they lag far behind the Freudian empire – through force of personality and clinical shrewdness rather than ideas. He talks here of integrating the "animus" and "anima" into the personality, but Freud was already discussing innate bisexuality in 1898. There is talk of integrating the "shadow", the bad, disowned part of the self, but what sophisticated moralist has not advocated this? The more abstruse Jungian ideas, the archetypes and the collective unconscious, do not become any clearer as they emerge in these interviews.

What we need for the future, says one of the Jungians interviewed, are politicians who have integrated the shadow and can thus prevent the collective shadow (such as Nazism) from springing up again. It seems unlikely that we shall have them. Indeed, Jung, it is said here, had deathbed visions of an annihilated world, which may be very truth or may be the kind of legend that springs up around a charismatic figure. A little amateurish this film may be, but there is a lot of interest in it for anyone who would like to learn something about Jung and his influence.

Music and continental MSS

Sarah Bradford

Sotheby's, London, held a sale on May 9 of music and continental manuscripts and books, which included some interesting collections of letters by composers. Among the Beethoven material, a remarkable autograph letter by the composer to his "Immortal Beloved", Antonie Brentano, identified the accompanying engraving as the portrait of himself by Louis Letronne – "Several people maintain that in this picture they can also discern my soul quite clearly". It was sold for £55,000 to a private buyer. MacNutt paid a large price, £33,000, for a letter dated October 1, 1816, signed by Beethoven but written in the hand of his amanuensis, von Häring. The letter was, however, in English and to his publisher, Robert Birchall, and it discussed the Seventh Symphony, the "Archduke Trio" and several other major works (the following lot comprised a previously unpublished draft of Birchall's reply). There was also a hitherto unknown and unrecorded autograph sketch leaf by the composer, containing ideas for several works including the Overture "Leonore No I" and the song "Nur wer Sehnsucht kennt" which once belonged to his friend, Countess Giulietta Guicciardi. It was acquired by MacNutt for £13,200.

Second only in importance to the Beethoven material was a fine collection of letters and manuscripts by Verdi, including an early autograph letter by the composer to the singer, Ignazio Marini, about *Oberto*, enclosing and describing a previously unknown aria for the Barcelona production of the work (£6,600 to Batkin). Other apparently unpublished letters by Verdi to the librettist, Francesco Maria Piave, included one postmarked November 30, [1844], about *I due Foscari* (£6,600), one of November 17, [1845], discussing in great detail the composer's ideas for changes in *Attila* (£7,150), one of 22 [August, 1846] about *Macbeth*, *Il Corsaro* and other works (£6,600), and one of November 28, 1850, concerning *Rigoletto* and *Stiffelio* (£7,700), while a one-page autograph manuscript of Verdi's early ideas for *Rigoletto* written as a memorandum for Piave went for £8,250. All these were also bought by Batkin. The most important lot of the collection, Verdi's autograph working copy of the complete libretto for *Ernani*, containing much material later cut from the final version and extensive corrections and stage directions, was acquired by the same collector for £77,000.

A number of letters by Mahler described his states of mind – one, an early letter with illustrations dating from 1879, previously heavily expurgated by Alma Mahler in her edition of the letters, showed that she had omitted the most interesting passages (£3,520 to Falk). The original of a similar edited letter of the late autumn of 1891, describing the effect upon him of reading Nietzsche, made £2,860 to the same buyer, while the most remarkable item of the collection, an autograph letter by Sigmund Freud to Emil Freund, written five days after Mahler's death in 1910 and describing his celebrated consultation with Mahler, was acquired for £6,820 by MacNutt. A fine collection of fifty-six letters by Rossini to the Marchese Sampieri, some seventy pages dating from c1821–45, discussing all manner of subjects from the composition of operas and the capabilities of singers and musicians to travel, business and domestic matters, was purchased by Barker for £34,100.

Among other interesting letters one by Ravel dating from 1919 to G. Jean-Audry, about "Le Tombeau de Couperin", de Falla and Lord Berners, was bought by Batkin for £7,150 while a letter of September 1924 by Manuel de Falla to the same correspondent discussing Lorca and his own compositions went to the same buyer for £8,800. The price paid by Falk, £2,640, for an autograph letter of February 1932 by Alban Berg to Hans Pless discussing "Der Wein", the Three Orchestral Pieces and the Lyric Suite, was an auction record for this composer.

In the continental manuscripts section, the autograph manuscript of the first two of George Sand's *Lettres d'un Voyageur* evoked a broken liaison when Sand, on "honeymoon" with de Musset in Venice in 1833, deserted him as he lay ill with typhoid for Pargello, the Venetian doctor who attended him. Sand toured the Veneto with Pargello after de Musset's return to France but none the less dedicated the first *Lettre* to her ex-lover who magnanimously declared it "sublime". Meanwhile Pargello provided the background for her second *Lettre* recording her impressions of Venice. An autograph poem by Proust about Robert de Montesquiou titled "Chanson sur Robert" went for £6,050 to Batkin and a letter by Tolstoy, Toula, July 1901, to Prince Mirza Reza Khan, the Persian Minister, expatiating on his philosophy of war and peace, was sold for £7,260 to MacNutt.

An art of fragments

Robin Kinross

Edward Wright: Graphic work and painting
Arts Council travelling exhibition

The last item in this retrospective exhibition suggests the typical themes of Edward Wright's work, and also the impossibility of pinning his work down in any of the recognized categories of visual production. The "Codex atorrantis" is a single sheet of brown ribbed kraft (wrapping) paper, 20 feet by 10 inches, folded Chinese-fashion to make a book of twenty-four pages (each page 10 inches square). Its language and its subject is *lunfardo*, the slang of outcasts in Buenos Aires. Wright explains in the catalogue that, like the original Parisian *argot*, this is "a secret code invented to protect the community from intruders who might try to control their activity". Words set in large type are juxtaposed with each other, translations in several European languages are given, and sometimes images are added; from postage stamps, photographs, film stills, a record sleeve. It is an art of fragments, prizing spontaneity and roughness, listening to the voices of outcasts.

The foreignness and freshness may be seen as the result of Wright's rootless childhood spent in Barcelona and Liverpool as the son of South American diplomatic parents, but they also stem from his resistance to specialization. "Graphic work" is the only reliable description of his production. Even with painting, he has frequently been drawn to materials other than oil and canvas: "polyester resin and fibre glass", "embossed tin", "stencilled oil on tenchest plywood". And his productions tend to become collages. This fits with the image of Wright as a rootless cosmopolitan, shoring up the ruins with tickets, hotel bills, scraps of newspapers (as in the collage "Travelling", 1959). But then there are also some surprising, almost luxurious, watercolours, from a South American journey and from his present retirement in Cambridge. In this last series he is closest to England, in subject matter and medium. They are not at all genteel, however: in their trust in the materials – the paint is given a very free hand – they seem calligraphic (Far-Eastern rather than Western).

Wright has worked as a graphic and typographic designer, and for many years was head of the graphic design department at Chelsea School of Art. Examples of posters and other printed design jobs are included in the exhibition, though none of his advertising or book-design work. His architectural lettering, shown in a series of dye-line prints and photographs, is of considerable interest. The forms of his letters and numerals are constructed with the help of quite precisely defined programmes (limiting stroke-width or angle, for example). By this fearless logic some odd characters are produced, far from the Roman and subsequently Ministry of Works ideal of the Trajan forms, though always properly architectural, in a way that mere enlarged printing typefaces can never be. His largest achievement here, and also the most formally sophisticated, is the lettering for New Scotland Yard (1968).

Wright's modernism has not been institutional, but rather small-scale and informal. In an essay, "The painter", reprinted in the catalogue, Wright remarks on the use of frames in easel pictures, to "isolate the picture and pay homage to it". And, in keeping with their unceremonial air, his own pictures mostly have minimal wood frames. A special pleasure is the lean perspex and metal construction, devised to display the "Codex atorrantis". There is always a strong human presence, implied or stated, in these images: heads, and especially mouths and ears, the organs of communication. Wright's first exhibition (1948) was devoted to "useful and metaphoric objects": musical instruments, gas rings, kettles, coat hangers and other available items. And while his concern with the everyday is strong, the work has not had much to do with kitchen sinks or the Euston Road. The useful objects tend to turn into something else, with multiple meanings and chance admitted. It is rather different from the single-mindedness of both British domestic realism and high-modern international abstraction.

Modernism may be collapsing at its centre, in large-scale state and corporate architecture and in the giant paintings designed to occupy its wall space, but Wright's more modest and local art survives well. This lively and thoughtful work could be a tonic for metropolitan palates, jaded by a diet of post-modernism and Covent-Garden designerism. The exhibition is at Norwich School of Art Gallery until June 1; it will be at the Museum of Modern Art, Oxford, from June 16 to July 28; and at Wrexham Library Art Centre from August 13 to September 6. It is a pity that no London showing has been arranged.

In the wrong clothes

Adam Mars-Jones

REBECCA BELL-METEREAU
Hollywood Androgyny
260pp. Columbia University Press. $24.95.
0 231 05834 9

So much is botched or evaded in Rebecca Bell-Metereau's survey of Hollywood's "forays into the androgynous zone" that its occasional bouts of good sense and sharp comment come as a real surprise. The book's virtues are easy to overlook, its defects impossible to ignore. Bell-Metereau's subject is cross-dressing in American film, from Charlie Chaplin's *The Masquerader* (1914) to the present. The subject calls for scholarly scruple, technical knowledge, feminist stringency and tact; the author has deficiencies in all these departments.

Her opening pages have moments of an almost startling rigour, as when she declares that a film presenting "a likable yet powerless woman is no less sexist than a film that presents a despicable yet powerful one". That would certainly slim down the corpus of acceptable movies. But fifty pages later, she is so keen to see *Some Like It Hot* (1959) as an exemplary "open" film, diametrically opposed to Howard Hawks's closed *I Was a Male War Bride* of ten years earlier, that she praises Sugar Kane (the gold-digging bimbo played by Marilyn Monroe) as "totally nonthreatening, sympathetic, and warm", as if Sugar's fluffy pathos somehow broke the mould. Trying to establish *Hot* (as she calls it) as a pivotal film, the author flies off the handle herself. For her, the scene in which Joe (Tony Curtis), doing his Cary Grant act, feigns impotence so that Sugar makes all the going, shows Joe relinquishing "the traditional masculine control of the situation". Who needs control, when you can get what you want without it?

In other areas, too, Bell-Metereau's practice falls short of her theory. In her first chapter she says charmingly: "Just as we look to the Eskimo for refined terms describing snow or to Arabic for different qualities of sand, we may look to the homosexual and transvestite worlds for the specialized vocabulary of those who have reason to make fine distinctions in describing sexual impersonation." In practice, she draws exclusively from Esther Newton's *Mother Camp*, which has more than its fair share of fantasy: "At any given homosexual party, there will be two competing, yet often complementary people around whom interest and activity swirl . . . ". Any such sweeping statement, even when not made by a woman about men who like men, should be taken with a mine of salt; but Bell-Metereau is hell-bent on locating the prototype of the Curtis/Lemmon relationship in *Hot*.

Another dubious statement, referring to the "hostility and fear of women that many homosexuals confess", arrives with a small numeral attached, of the sort that promises a footnote; but the numeral is an orphan, without a source to back it up. In fact the item of scholarly equipment which the author has come closest to mastering is the po face. She ends her discussion of Paul Bartel's *Private Parts* (1973) with the sentence: "The importance of the breast is indicated by an attending policeman's comment: 'Boy, with knockers like that, I could go for this guy myself.'"

As a sociologist, Bell-Metereau favours unitary causes, however bizarre, so that the stock-market crash made female imitation of masculine behaviour acceptable again, and the move to the suburbs after the Second World War created awareness of a suffocating maternal authority. As a critic of pure film, she is unduly impressed by the basics; she salutes the "brilliant synthesis of form and content" in shots from *Psycho* (a high angle prevents the viewer from noticing Anthony Perkins is impersonating his mother or, later, carrying a mummy downstairs), rather as if deceptive shots normally advertised their deceptiveness.

With films above a certain age, a writer can plausibly discuss the issues they raise without respecting them as works of art; but with recent films, whose interest is not as yet historical, a little criticism is called for. Does *Dressed to Kill* hate women? Is *Tootsie* patronizing? Bell-Metereau's abdications in these areas are particularly damaging to her book: "Whether a film like *Dressed to Kill* incited rape or misogyny is a moot point, but the very fact that the film has elicited such vigorous controversy demonstrates a healthy public awareness of film images of women . . . ". Brian de Palma is compared to Sternberg, of all directors, as an inextricable tangle of urges, both feminist and anti-feminist. On *Tootsie* she is every bit as forthright: "It is clear, however, from the generally positive response of most critics, that *Tootsie* avoided offending seriously in any direction."

By contrast, there are two films which *Hollywood Androgyny* discusses with real verve. One of them is Nicholas Ray's camp western *Johnny Guitar* (1954), in which, extraordinarily for Hollywood, the heroine (Joan Crawford) is rewarded for playing a male role, in black shirt and jeans, and penalized (by nearly being hanged) when she reverts to wearing a dress. The other film is Ridley Scott's *Alien* (1979). Bell-Metereau exaggerates the film's novelty, but shrewdly pinpoints the unease of some critics with the Sigourney Weaver character, sensible, decisive and surviving. She lists some of the film's reversals: a computer called "Mother" with a seductive female voice, men who gave birth to monsters. She calls attention to the alien's oral rape of the John Hurt character, and points out its correspondence with a scene towards the end of the film when the Ian Holm character (described in the author's one memorable phrase as a "closet android") tries to kill Sigourney Weaver by stuffing a magazine into her mouth. The magazine, it turns out, is a girly mag, and the message of the failed attack is clear: Sigourney Weaver is not going to have sexist stereotypes thrust down her throat.

The pity of it is that neither *Johnny Guitar* nor *Alien* contains cross-dressing, only strong women who claim men's clothes as the uniform of a person, without seeking to modify their femininity. The liveliest discussions in *Hollywood Androgyny* are well worth reading, but they would work as magazine articles just as well, and actually lie outside the range of the book's stated subject.

Dean Point

It was some kind of quarry, a great excavation –
caterpillar treads, surface water, lumps of clay,
the mess of possibilities .... It bore the forbidden,
almost criminal aspect of industrial premises.

Ramps led down from one level circle to another,
three or four turns of a gigantic blunt screw.
Corrugated iron towers passed among themselves
on conveyor belts whatever was produced there,

and there was a blue-water harbour where it might be
transported along the coast, or to another coast.
We couldn't have told it from by-product or waste.
The soft rock fell to pieces in my hands.

To one side was a beach, with stones and trash.
Spongy sea-plants grew on it, and what looked like
bloodied thigh-bones but were only a different seaweed.
The sea spilt itself a little way onto the grey sand.

MICHAEL HOFMANN

Fooling about

John Lahr

STANLEY GREEN
The Great Clowns of Broadway
247pp. Oxford University Press. £19.50.
0 19 503471 6

The American Clowns came of age in the industrial boom of the early twentieth century, their wild energy capturing the dynamism and panic of the era. They were the most accurate stage metaphors of the society's new momentum. But W. C. Fields's last Broadway show was in 1930, Fanny Brice's in 1936, Joe Cook's and Jimmy Durante's in 1940. Only Bobby Clark and Bert Lahr continued to make a decent living on the Broadway stage after the musical play substituted concept for comedy. Chance brought Clark into book musicals in the 1950s: and Lahr, who outlasted them all, continued into the 1960s both in musical entertainments and straight roles.

The musical play, pioneered by Rodgers and Hammerstein in *Oklahoma!* (1943) changed the meaning of the term "musical comedy". Its audience no longer wanted mayhem, but idealism. Until then, the clowns had been the bulwark of musicals, injecting them with satire and spontaneity. In *The Great Clowns of Broadway* their inventiveness is well documented by Stanley Green, who catalogues their careers in the theatre, even if he is incapable of evoking their stage presence. "Low comedians" in their own day, the clowns became the next generation's high art, and, because of their self-sufficiency and resourcefulness, the models for many avant-garde theatre practitioners. Their acrobatics elevated the banal to the extraordinary. Joe Cook walked a tight-rope and rode a unicycle; W. C. Fields was an expert juggler who could keep twenty-five cigar boxes in the air, while delighting his audience with wry asides; and Clark, besides his tumbling, brought off such feats as unerringly kicking a pair of trousers on to a newel post.

"My job", Fanny Brice said, "is to make the audience comfortable. Because if they wanted to be nervous they could have stayed home and added up the bills." Improvisation was the main vehicle for the exceptional intimacy that they achieved with their public. Clark could bring the house down by interrupting the show to confide, "Never before has a thin plot been so complicated". "I listen to the audience", Lahr once said, "and they tell me where the laugh is."

Such immediacy provides the thrill of great clowning. Words – certainly Mr Green's words – do not adequately convey the quality of the fun. His book, too is sadly devoid of ideas, analysis, or even a descriptive language to characterize the clowns: W. C. Fields's voice, for example "has the quality of rusty taffy". What is valuable is the antics and laughter of the clowns which, together with their usurping progeny, the musical, are America's greatest contributions to Western theatre.

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Yale University Press
13 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3JF

Awopping and bopping

John Stokes

CHARLES WHITE
The Life and Times of Little Richard
255pp. Pan. Paperback. £2.95.
0 330 28776 1
JIM HASKINS
Richard Pryor: A man and his madness
227pp. Robson. £9.95.
0 8253 0200 5

The singer "Little Richard" and the actor-comedian Richard Pryor have both suffered from success in ways peculiar to black entertainers. Their biographers, though, make contrasting witnesses. Charles White is an Irish chiropodist living in Scarborough, Jim Haskins a black professor of English in New York, yet it is Haskins who has had to make do with secondary sources and other people's interviews, whereas half of White's book is Little Richard vividly verbatim. In any case, White's fervid prose is more appropriate to his subject than Haskins's well-meaning mixture of academic precision and street argot which never looks relaxed on the page. If White's similes seem a little uncontrolled (and unverifiable too – the end of Little Richard's act is "like getting your throat cut at the finest moment of orgasmic delight"), we should remember that he is dealing with a master of shudder and spasm whose lasting message, "Awop-Bop-a-Loo-Mop Alop-Bam-Boom", has long posed a grave problem of exegesis.

According to testimony, when Ricardo Penniman, the boy from Macon, Georgia, arrived at a Californian recording studio in the early 1950s he was wearing a shirt "so loud it looked as though he had drunk raspberry juice, cherryade, malt, and greens and then thrown up all over himself". Later came the slabs of slub-silk suiting that were the hallmark of his international fame as "Little Richard, the King of Rock'n'Roll", and later still the bouffant wig, pancake makeup and mirror-mosaicked jacket. But few among his first white fans would have guessed that the immortalizer of "Long Tall Sally" and "Lucille" had as a youth been inspired by gentleman acquaintances with names like "Madame Oop" and "Miss Thing".

The Life and Times of Little Richard explicates what the music always delivered: moments to "make your liver quiver, your bladder spatter, and your knees freeze" and, depending on your inclinations, to make "your big toe shoot right up in your boot". More than that, it offers rare information about the sources of rock and roll and in particular about its entrepreneurs: men like Bumps Blackwell and Art Rupe of the *Specialty* label and Zenas Sears, the disc jockey, who brought it to the waiting world. From it too, one comes to understand why Little Richard's output has been limited to reworkings of half a dozen songs and why he has missed the subtlety (and the sentimentality) of his early rival Ray Charles. In music, he is as much a fundamentalist as he is in religion.

A studio photograph of Gladys, Elvis and Vernon Presley in 1938 when Elvis was three years old: it is taken from Elvis and Gladys, *reviewed on this page.*

Periodically, Ricardo Penniman attempts absolute penance for the colossal indulgences of Little Richard. In 1957 he enrolled at an Alabama Bible college and attended it regularly – driving himself there in a yellow Cadillac. He returned to the world of rock and roll only to drop out again, seemingly permanently, in the 1970s, in order to become a travelling preacher and salesman for Memorial Bibles International Inc, publishers of the annotated Black Heritage edition which shows how many major biblical figures have been black.

Little Richard's saintly alter ego could hardly be a relation of Pryor's comic invention, the "Reverend James L. White", who in jump suit and patent boots loudly proclaims that he's "going for the Billy Graham dollar". Pryor knows the hell that Penniman believes he has escaped: the "chitlin circuit" of cheap clubs and bars. From sharing the bill with female impersonators (many of them female) and gay wrestlers who held hands after the exhibition bout, Pryor moved on to "blaxploitation" films and eventually mainstream Hollywood. His boast, "I'm better than my movies" is valid, as his best work has been the improvised monologues, some recorded, which recreate episodes from his private and professional life: struggles with wives and with drugs, quarrels with television companies over censorship, and with the gay community over covert racism. Pryor has "killed" a car by shooting it to bits in a fit of pique, and then come close to killing himself in a domestic explosion which possibly involved a *cordon bleu* recipe for the preparation of cocaine. After it, racing down the drive of his Californian home, his scorched skin welded to what remained of his polyester shirt, Pryor was heard to mutter Penniman's prayer: "This is the Lord paying me back . . . Lord give me another chance." "Pryor on Fire" is now part of his act.

White's book ends with a compilation of high spots from Little Richard's sermons which insist that "God never intended no man, woman, boy, girl, black, white, red, brown and yellow to be bisexual", and that He wants all His people to give up "rock and roll for the rock of ages": a severe but authentic climax to a book that has triumphantly detailed the preacher's own sexual and musical misdemeanours. A far greater act of humiliation has Little Richard pleading that he was "always supported by white people" when, as everyone else knows, he was always subject to the most ruthless form of white exploitation. Haskins never loses sight of the racial factor, but eventually finds it hard not to measure Pryor's talents according to the Hollywood standards of contracts and ratings, awards and real estate that Pryor has supposedly repudiated and which have led him to mortify the flesh in his own manner. There's obviously still a way to go, though Eddie Murphy, the current black dauphin, more than twenty years Pryor's junior, has a nice parody of Little Richard: "Good Golly Miss Molly / You look like a hog / Better start running and learning to jog."

The Presley line

Tony Russell

ELAINE DUNDY
Elvis and Gladys: The genesis of the King
362pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £12.95.
0 297 78210 X

There was a moment in June I won't easily forget . . . . I sat in my air-frozen room at a Holiday Inn wondering if it was all worth it.

Suddenly I was ringing Roy Turner, Mississippi genealogist in Tupelo to see how he was doing down there.

"I've been waiting for you to come back," he said. ". . . Elvis' great-great-great-grandmother was a full-blooded Cherokee called Morning Dove White!"

Elaine Dundy's enthusiastic research among Elvis Presley's great-aunts and among genealogists in the southern states of America has its faintly ludicrous moments, but *Elvis and Gladys* is an entirely serious book. Ms Dundy has none of the metropolitan contempt for her subject that soured Albert Goldman's *Elvis* (1982); indeed, she sometimes sounds like an indulgent great-aunt herself, soaking up family anecdotes as she tirelessly works her way through a thousand Tupelo coffee-mornings.

The advantages of not being a typical Presley biographer are instructive. Intrigued by the Presley clan and their everyday Southern world for their own sake, rather than as a tiresome preamble to the Greatest Rock 'n' Roll Story Ever Told, Dundy is entrusted with revelations that were denied to her more single-minded predecessors. Although often informative about Elvis's musical background she is more interested in his family antecedents, the blood and character that he inherited from his parents, handsome, unlucky Vernon Presley and spendthrift, determined Gladys Smith.

Gladys does not have quite the half-book that the title promises – even a level-headed account of Elvis's rise to fame obscures any other theme – but she is nearly always around: sometimes a sturdy, hardworking Southern mother, as in the photographs of Walker Evans or Dorothea Lange, sometimes less heroic but amiable, fond of a beer, not much of a manager, but devoted to her only son. She brought him up carefully, and she was reimbursed with depression, drink and an early death – a commonplace tragedy, perhaps, but one feels a renewed dislike of those, such as Elvis's manager Colonel Tom Parker, who thrust her towards it.

Elvis and Gladys may not appeal to record collectors and rock 'n' roll historians, but it treats its central characters humanely, ending in 1958 with Gladys's death and sparing the reader, as Gladys herself was spared, Elvis Presley's further nineteen years of waste and decay.

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Yale University Press
13 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3JF

The case for the Constitution

J. R. Pole

DAVID F. EPSTEIN
The Political Theory of The Federalist
234pp. University of Chicago Press. £18.70.
0226 212998
RICHARD K. MATTHEWS
The Radical Politics of Thomas Jefferson: A revisionist view
171pp. University Press of Kansas. $22.50.
070060 2569

There are two approaches to the problem of writing about *The Federalist*, the celebrated series of political essays by Alexander Hamilton, James Madison and John Jay which were published in 1789–88 in New York under the pseudonym "Publius". One is to treat it as a classic text in the canon of political thought. The other is to regard it as propaganda: a product of the political struggle for the ratification of the American Constitution, its arguments being instruments of persuasion rather than abstract theories. While all sensible studies combine both methods, there is a marked tendency for political scientists to take the first, and to emerge with the type of analysis that applies to Publius the methods and standards often employed in the analysis of Hobbes, Locke, Montesquieu and Rousseau.

Considerable portions of *The Federalist* are addressed to specific institutional arrangements peculiar to the Constitution, while there are other sections which were meant to assuage the fears or appeal to the interests of identifiable sections of the American community. Where these are concerned, the theory, if it is to have abstract and general implications, has to be distilled from the hard stuff of politics. Observations which would be criticisms of a tract in political philosophy may well refer to points of strength for the purposes of *The Federalist*'s authors; originality was no part of those purposes. Its greatness really lies in the extraordinary intellectual power with which it applies the best of Enlightenment political theory to the facts of the case.

David F. Epstein writes more in the tradition of the political scientists than the historians. He notes but does not explore the political background and the arguments that were directed at specific interests and anxieties. His strength lies in two aspects of his own approach. One is that he reads the text with uncommon closeness and sensitivity; the other is an extensive knowledge of the European political thought which itself forms an indispensable background to the minds of the authors. In a study as finely wrought and well balanced as this, it is difficult to select a single theme and say "This is the core of the argument". But such a theme does emerge in Epstein's contention that those commentators who have interpreted *The Federalist* as indicating a fundamentally pessimistic, "Hobbesian" view of human nature have misunderstood it. The authors of *The Federalist* and their supporters did indeed believe that checks and balances were required to contain the excesses of democracy, as where the Senate was needed to check the House, which was expected to be more impetuous and more susceptible to waves not only of popular passion but of short-term impulse. These safeguards were required not only against "the people", but against the machinations of self-regarding groups, or factions, whether popular or not; the masses were not vicious but ill-informed and easily misled. *The Federalist*'s view of human nature is a rounded view; it calls in the better side to redress the weakness of the worst.

It is wholly consistent with this view that *The Federalist* recognizes that in a free and expanding society ambitious and enterprising men will throw their energies into self-advancement. In Hamilton's view the quest for glory is one of the noblest of causes. The problem which *The Federalist* theoretically resolves, claiming at the same time with considerable credibility that the Constitution will resolve it in practice, is how to harness these very qualities and make them serve the purposes of preserving not only freedom, but personal security and wealth. Publius insists that in spite of all the evidence to the contrary, mankind is capable of self-government, but only if the people's virtues are incorporated into the process.

[illegible]

10. "The latent causes of faction are sown in the nature of man", says its author, James Madison, in a line that has been endlessly repeated. But Epstein argues that he is saying more than he has often been taken to mean. Factions arise where the government is so organized as to make them effective; and since it is the specific duty of government to protect the faculties that express themselves in faction (these are the "latent" causes), it becomes the duty of government to protect the legitimate results of the free exercise of those faculties. "Thus", says Epstein, "the causes of faction seem to be sown not simply in the nature of man but in political arrangement, i.e. a government which attends to its 'first object', the protection of men's faculties". The right to property originates not merely (as for Locke) in labour, but in these "faculties".

This reading is not wholly satisfactory. Faction is just as capable of arising in a court as in a republic, as any reader of Saint-Simon's *Memoirs* will know; it is the form taken by faction, rather than its causes, that will depend on the form of government, and Madison's point about republican government is that it can be so designed as to control the republican forms of faction – while at the same time it has an obligation to protect the freedom in which human interests are best served.

The authors of *The Federalist* were forced to wrestle with the fact that republics did not enjoy a very good reputation for stability. If the case for the Constitution failed to convince the voters, then America faced the same dangers as the turbulent democracies of the ancient world. Epstein's closely textual analysis perhaps misses a little the sense of historical occasion. The opportunities were great, but so were the dangers; no one could be sure that the experiment would succeed. But there is very little to criticize in this book. Epstein takes due note of the influence of European thinkers such as Hume, Montesquieu and many others where they are relevant, but never throws himself into an extravagant quest for such external sources of Publius' thought, nor does he indulge in anachronistic strictures on the authors' political morality. This is a guide to the study of *The Federalist* that speaks of the authors with appropriate respect, a sentiment which one feels they would have reciprocated.

The Hobbesian view of Madison's thought about human nature is drawn into sharp contrast with that of Jefferson as radical democrat by Richard K. Matthews in his contribution to the University of Kansas Press series on the American Presidency. Madison is here linked with Hamilton in political philosophy, as they were in writing *The Federalist*; it is Jefferson, with his hopes for a pastoral, non-commercial and basically communitarian way of life, who stands aside from the tradition. "Americans quote the Declaration of Independence, but they live *The Federalist*", Matthews observes, and there is much truth in this. But it does raise the further question as to why they have returned to ideals enunciated by Jefferson so insistently that widely differing political parties have claimed to stand on a Jeffersonian platform.

By concentrating on Jefferson's more radical reflections it is possible to build up a strong composite picture, which is undoubtedly in harmony with some of Jefferson's fondest wishes; he wanted and partly believed in a pastoral world of self-supporting farmers, virtuous, self-governing and free. But he also wanted for himself, and could hardly have denied to others, a variety of goods that could be supplied and paid for only on the world market. The "entrepreneurial" farmer has by definition a stake in the market. America depended on the Atlantic commercial economy long before there was any question of serious industrial development, and the historian who wants to read the economics of capitalism right out of Jefferson's world-picture has more to contend with than his distaste for manufacturing and cities. In any case his change of mind on American manufacturing represents a rather late recognition of facts which would soon have become unavoidable.

Matthews argues persuasively that Jefferson's studies of and respect for the Indians had more than anthropological significance. The Indians proved that man could live socially and harmoniously without the artificial structures of government, and could rise to exalted heights of moral philosophy. But there is another side to this matter, and it bears heavily on the issue. For Jefferson recognized (however regretfully) that the Indians would have to give way to the advance of the stronger civilization, and he said nothing that might have impeded this ineluctable process. Was the progress to which he attached so much importance, then, and which was associated with the advance of white civilization, actually incompatible with moral progress? It was usually at about this point that Jefferson stopped inquiring.

This brief book presents with considerable conviction the case for Jefferson as a radical democrat. It does so at the risk of depicting him more as a dreamer or a dabbler than a politician; yet as politician he was shrewdly pragmatic and fervently nationalistic – at a cost to some of his other ideals. Madison and Hamilton, both at Philadelphia and in *The Federalist*, were dealing with the real world, and, as David Epstein has shown, were making the best of it; as president, Jefferson was no less realistic.

In his emphasis on the philosophical differences between Jefferson and Madison, Richard Matthews omits one of the most important beliefs they had in common – religious freedom. There is no mention here of Virginia's famous Statute, drafted by Jefferson and steered through the legislature largely by Madison. Without this victory it is unlikely that the separation of church and state would have made its way into the First Amendment. Perhaps Jefferson should be allowed a little more influence than is here acknowledged.

Arguments from abroad

Maurice Cranston

PAUL MERRILL SPURLIN
The French Enlightenment in America: Essays on the times of the founding fathers
203pp. University of Georgia Press. $20.
08203 07211
GARRY WILLS
George Washington and the Enlightenment
272pp. Robert Hale. £16.95.
07090 23146

How much did the Founding Fathers of the United States owe to the theorists of the French Enlightenment? The question has been much discussed, but never very conclusively answered. The novelty of Paul Merrill Spurlin's book is that he has done a great deal of what might be called empirical research, calculating the number of books by the *philosophes* that were owned by the American founders, the number of references to such books in their correspondence, speeches and articles, and the extent of their knowledge of French.

In the earliest years of settlement, the study of French was not encouraged in America if only because France was connected in the American mind with Popery and lubricity. Even Jefferson, one of the the most assiduous readers of French books, urged Americans to send their children to Canada to learn French, since "while learning the language in France, a young man's morals, health and fortune are more irresistibly endangered than in any country in the universe".

So which Americans did know French? Washington, according to several biographers, learnt French from the Huguenot preceptor Maryes, but Professor Spurlin quotes a letter from Washington to Lafayette, where he declares: "I am unacquainted with your language [and] too far advanced in years to acquire a knowledge of it." Franklin started to teach himself French at the age of twenty-six, but according to John Adams, people in Paris said "that it was scarcely possible to understand" Franklin's French when Franklin was there as American Minister. Adams himself made heroic efforts to master French in Paris but was [illegible] mortified to be told on his departure from France that "it was very true that both Mr. Franklin and I spoke French badly".

It emerges from Spurlin's researches that the only two founding fathers whose French was irreproachable were Gouverneur Morris and Alexander Hamilton. Ironically, they were among those least influenced by French ideas; Hamilton, a close reader of David Hume, was a child of the Scottish, as opposed to the French, Enlightenment, and a bitter critic of the ideology of the French Revolution. Morris, as an eye-witness of the realities of the French Revolution, was not deceived by the myth of it.

Of course, a fair number of those Americans who could not speak French read it: and Spurlin gives an account of the rising sales of French books in American and their listings in private libraries, especially in the later years of the eighteenth century, when the Americans' need for French military and political help in their rebellion against British rule overcame their earlier prejudice against French religion and morals. His findings suggest that Rousseau was appreciated as a literary man – the author of *La Nouvelle Héloïse* – rather than as a philosopher; that Voltaire was admired in the Southern colonies but not in New England; that the theories of Diderot, d'Alembert, Helvetius and Holbach were not widely diffused. On the other hand Buffon was much admired, and became in 1768 the first Frenchman to be elected to the American Philosophical Society, and Condorcet, the leading Americanist among the *philosophes*, was well enough known to be made an honorary citizen of New Haven, in the 1780s.

The philosopher of the French Enlightenment who clearly exercised the greatest influence on the American mind when the foundation of the new state was taking place was Montesquieu. His books were widely owned, read, translated and quoted: and it is his version of the doctrine of the "separation of the powers", of "checks and balances" and the autonomy of the executive, legislative and judiciary which informed – and still informs – the American conception of a model constitution, that is, a constitution designed to reconcile in perpetuity the rule of law and freedom [illegible]

The much debated question of whether Montesquieu correctly understood the English constitution is irrelevant here; the Americans wanted to discard some parts of their English heritage and to consolidate others, and Montesquieu provided an amalgam of tradition and innovation which exactly met their demands, and this is doubtless why he became, in Madison's words, "the oracle who is always consulted". Jefferson once proposed that *The Spirit of Laws* "become the elementary book in all our colleges", and only became critical of Montesquieu in later years when he realized that Hamilton could find support there for Federalist party policies.

A new book by Garry Wills is always an event. His latest is an illustrated essay, on the lines of Starobinski's *Les Emblèmes de la raison*, in which Professor Wills examines the images where George Washington is depicted as an idol of the Englightenment. The argument of the book is that while Washington may not have read the works of the *philosophes*, it was he, more than others, who most fully realized in America the Englightenment's ideal of a founder, reviving the classical ideal of a republic. Professor Wills depicts Washington acting, as it were, instinctively in directions which were pointed out in theoretical terms by the authors of the French Engligtenment, especially those who were overtly republican – the early Montesquieu, Rousseau, Condorcet.

Washington in his deepest role as founder, as father of his country, lived up to his classical pattern. He was not seen as a law giver in the autocratic sense, a Caesar or Moses . . . . The representation of him as a wise man of the law follows the "philosopher in his cabinet" type, a type made familiar by portraits like Hyacinthe Rigaud's Bossuet – the sacred orator is shown surrounded by his arsenal of learning, prepared to preach what he has learned by deep study.

Garry Wills is here describing William Rush's statue of Washington standing on books and scrolls; the "deep study" it suggests was in reality a deep study of life and of men rather than of books; but somehow it suited the spirit of the age for Washington to be honoured not only as a man who embodied the highest republican virtues, but as man who had surrendered all personal power to the sovereignty of reason. [illegible]

To maintain the flow

W. A. P. Manser

DOUGLAS JAY
Sterling: A plea for moderation
288pp. Sidgwick and Jackson. £15.
0283 990783

This is the latest in a line of arresting books by Douglas Jay, Treasury Minister and President of the Board of Trade in the early post-war Labour governments and a Fellow of All Souls. In the early chapters Jay presents a compelling history of money in the British economy from its earliest beginnings until the present time, culminating in a remarkable listing of the Retail Price Index for every single year, with five exceptions, from 1264 to 1983. To the approach of the economic historian and theorist is added the lively passion of a Labour politician confronted with what he considers the unforgivable excesses of the present Thatcher Government – and he attacks these with unsparing and meticulous fury.

Jay's *Sterling* has an important theme. It is that governments have a duty, by correctly using money as a measure of value, to maintain effective demand above the level of money costs, and thus to discharge their responsibility for the undisturbed prosperity of the people. That this would require an incomes policy, as well as import, exchange and credit controls, in addition to the direction of capital, and is bound to involve a high level of inflation, is, he argues very persuasively, neither new nor of considerable moment. What is important is that these policies would bring full employment, high investment, steady growth and greater average wealth. The inspiration behind this argument obviously comes from J. M. Keynes; he mentions Milton Friedman only infrequently, once to call him "the ayatollah" of monetarism.

The major attraction of the book is that it stimulates fundamental questions, and for this, if for no other reason, it should be read. What is demand? Does it need to be stimulated at all? Is it perhaps latent, something ever present? What creates growth? Is it above all innovation, enterprise, and the hard resourceful work which draws out endemic demand at higher and higher levels? What is money? All social and economic history informs us that it is a medium of exchange, and, as a necessary condition of this, a standard of value; it is a store of value only as a consequence. If this is so, then Locke and the Currency school were right. Money must be an independent entity, invariable in volume, and expanding only with growth in output. Jay quotes the Radcliffe Committee's assertion that liquidity, not money, is the trigger of spending, and that velocity is as important as money stock. But liquidity is surely the store of money, and most commentators now agree with Jay, that velocity does not really affect the flow. Jay argues that Edward III, Elizabeth I and those responsible for the suspensions of the Banking Act of 1844 were all rejecting "sound money". From his book, however, these emerge more as gradualist restorers of sound money. It is important to remember that the Act confined money creation to the Bank of England, an impartial body – better by far than the open-ended procedures of today, better even than the Royal Mint under the King's prerogative. The ensuing century was one of unparalleled growth and price stability.

The book rightly draws our attention to the peculiar conditions of the post-1945 world: sustained growth with sustained inflation – Douglas Jay's "moderate" inflation of 5 per cent a year, incidentally, is more than a doubling of prices in twenty years – followed by "cost inflation" and the depression. He correctly attributes the cost inflation to trade union bargaining power; wages are 70 per cent of the total costs of the economy, and they ceased to rise and fall with economic events after the mid-1930s. Thereafter they steadily rose, with a momentum increasing through the 1950s, 60s and 70s. Allied to this was the phenomenon singled out through the book: the growth of money creation through bank credit, which reached its full force after 1945. This, by any reckoning, is money creation by demand. Money, therefore, no longer controls inflation; it is led by it.

To return to Jay's Retail Price Index. This stood at 1146 in 1830 and 1146 again in 1931. Since then it has risen to 4454 in 1960, 12104 in 1975 and 29260 in 1983. If the table is plotted on a graph, then the whole course of price movements over the past five centuries is seen as a plateau gently sloping upwards to the 1800s, remaining absolutely flat until the 1930s, and then going up like the side of a house. This is horrifying, and a promise of disaster.

Capital City: London as a financial centre by Hamish McRae and Frances Cairncross (264pp. Methuen. £8.95; paperback, £3.95. 0 413 51120 0) is a revised edition of the book, first published in 1973. According to the authors, although there has been a spectacular rise and fall of firms since then, "the principal companies in the City in the early 1980s are still by and large the ones which dominated it in the late 1960s." However whereas before the most important tasks of the clearing banks was sterling retail banking, today "more than half their deposits and loans are in foreign currencies". Moreover banking has overtaken insurance as the biggest source of invisible earnings.

The rampant red ensign

T. C. Barker

VIVIAN VALE
The American Peril: The challenge to Britain on the North Atlantic, 1901–1904
256pp. Manchester University Press. £22.50.
0719017181

At the beginning of this century the increased industrial strength of the United States was seen by contemporaries as clear evidence of Britain's growing economic vulnerability. Historians have tended to follow this diagnosis of the fearful; but there are now very different second opinions to hand. These draw attention to Britain's vigorous response to this challenge, its vitality and capacity for adaptation. Vivian Vale, warming to his main theme, cites a number of examples, notably the defeat of America's bid to capture the British tobacco industry by the formation of Imperial Tobacco. Several American subsidiaries which did manage to open in Britain suffered disastrous financial results, as the more prudent British observers had forecast. The Underground Electric Railways of London, for instance, which built most of the London tubes, involved their gullible American shareholders in terrible losses. British Westinghouse at Trafford Park, Manchester, was also a financial disaster and was to be taken over eventually by Metropolitan Cammell and Vickers (Metropolitan Vickers).

Nowhere were the British more successful in resisting American attack – led by none other than the formidable John Pierpont Morgan, architect of US Steel and (said to be) financial controller of more than 55,000 miles of American railway – than in the North Atlantic liner trade. In the shipping industry, and in the shipyards which supported it, Britain not only led the world but dominated it. At the beginning of the present century the United Kingdom possessed a steam fleet of over 12 million tons, nearly half the international total. Her shipbuilders constructed three-fifths of the world's tonnage, including the largest and most technically advanced vessels. The United States, by contrast, strong in shipbuilding in the days of wood and sail, fell lamentably behind in the later nineteenth century when ever larger and more powerful vessels built of steel and driven by steam were required. Her costs were too great and high tariffs on imported shipbuilding materials proved a further handicap. The only American hope of becoming a dominant North Atlantic liner power was to use her financial strength to buy out her British rivals. The essence of this story was well told by Francis E. Hyde in his *Cunard and the North Atlantic* (1975), with full access to that company's records and to the MacIver papers. The present author covers the same ground but looks in more detail at Cunard's negotiations with the British government in 1902–3.

That remarkable accountant turned financier, John Ellerman, who by his death in 1933 was to amass the largest British fortune declared up to that date (over £36 million), was set firmly on his road to riches in 1901 when he sold *for cash* his majority shareholding in the Leyland Line to Morgan's International Mercantile Marine (then consisting of a number of American concerns in freight and passenger shipping) for a sum one-third above its already high market valuation. Forty-four ships of 277,000 gross registered tonnes passed into American hands. The Combine then proceeded to acquire control of the White Star Line, also at an inflated price (though only partly in cash), increasing its fleet to 114 ships (816,000 grt), including some of the world's fastest vessels and certainly its largest. With its eighteen non-British steamers (134,000 grt) this was a formidable armada. Furthermore, acquisition of White Star brought the Americans a special relationship with Harland and Wolff. The Belfast shipyard was to build solely for the Combine and its German associates on an agreed cost-plus basis provided they kept its order books full.

The cooperation of the two rapidly-growing German companies, Norddeutscher Lloyd and Hamburg Amerikanische, was to play a major part in Cunard's shrewd diplomacy when the scale of the American threat began to be appreciated by parliament and public in and after March 1902. What would be the defence implications if Cunard were also to throw in its hand with the Combine? Fast merchant cruisers were a significant part of Britain's defence strategy, especially in the early years of this century when, in the immediate pre-dreadnought period, her battle fleet was either aged or ageing. Christopher Furness tried to assemble a British Combine as a counterblast to the Americans along the lines of Imperial Tobacco; it was even to be called the Cunard Imperial Steam Navigation Company. But it failed because it would have required some government support and this was not forthcoming for a purely commercial venture.

The defence argument, however, weighed much more heavily with ministers. It had already been established that an increase in speed from twenty to twenty-four knots doubled a vessel's initial cost and, as twice the engine power was required, also greatly increased operating costs. Such acceleration, therefore, was not an economic proposition without government support. At this stage in the negotiations Cunard threatened to sell out to the Combine and this concentrated the official mind wonderfully. Cunard was lent £2.4 million, at a favourable rate of interest repayable over twenty years, to build two twenty-four-knot vessels and was promised a subsidy of £150,000 annually to make their operation viable. Cunard remained profitable and paid out dividends in most years. This was in sharp contrast to the International Mercantile Marine's results. With its overpriced ships – wags claimed the company contained almost as much water as the North Atlantic – its financial performance was disastrous even when nothing was put aside for depreciation. In 1903 it made a surplus of only £17,000 on a total capital of £34 million and at the end of the next year its market valuation had fallen to £18 million below this figure; $100 ordinary shares were down to $4. Not a cent was paid on these shares even during the prosperous transatlantic years of 1916–20; and the far less profitable inter-war period lay ahead.

The author structures his book well, though he sometimes nods on detail. The proofs have not been well checked and the uninformed reader would be hard pressed to trace the source of one of the tables. Vale does not make as much of Professor Hyde's important book on Cunard as he should and, in his interesting introductory chapter, which considers the American threat more generally, he does not seem aware of B. W. E. Alford's excellent business history of W. D. & H. O. Wills. Nor, alas, of the detailed chapter on American investment in the London underground in London Transport's official history.

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The need to resist

Michael R. Marrus

JACQUES ADLER
Face à la persécution: Les organisations juives à Paris de 1940 à 1944
328pp. Paris: Calmann-Lévy. 120fr.
2 7021 1345 1
RAYMOND-RAOUL LAMBERT
Carnet d'un témoin, 1940–1943
Edited by Richard Cohen
299pp. Paris: Fayard. 89fr.

Among the European countries decimated by the Nazi holocaust, France seems to have escaped relatively lightly: roughly a quarter of the 300,000 or so Jews living there were massacred; compared to much higher proportions in the Low Countries, and the nearly complete disappearance of Jews in much of Central and Eastern Europe. Historians have examined the reasons for this discrepancy, and their verdict seems to run strongly against the claims of collaborationist elements at Vichy that the French government provided a "shield" for those who could be saved – mainly native French Jews, who escaped to a much higher degree than did their poorer immigrant counterparts. Whatever the reasons for the Nazi failures in France (the large size of the country, in which a relatively small number of Jews were scattered, the lack of Nazi personnel and the diminished enthusiasm of some lower-echelon collaborators in the latter part of the war), a determined Vichy policy is not one of them. But now attention is beginning to focus on the Jews themselves, with scholars asking searching questions about the victims posed for other Jewish communities under the Nazi heel: What perceptions did the victims have about the murderous persecution they faced? Did Jewish leaders behave realistically in the face of Nazi terror? Could other strategies have saved lives or thwarted at least some of the Nazis' efforts?

Blending careful scholarship and a passion for his subject, Jacques Adler probes some of these issues for Parisian Jewry. A former participant in the French Jewish resistance, Adler originally prepared this work as a doctoral thesis for the University of Melbourne. His research displays remarkable objectivity, while reflecting the survivor's zeal to set the record straight.

At the centre of this drama are the sharp differences between established French Jews and the large mass of foreigners left in the capital following the defeat of France. Deeply patriotic, the former believed that anti-Jewish policy was mainly directed against outsiders, and represented a limited exercise launched by Nazism and forced upon reluctant French authorities. Foreign Jews grasped more clearly the depth of anti-Jewish inspiration of both Germans and French, and clung less readily to optimistic illusions about the Jews' prospects in France. Exploiting the assimilated Jewish leaders' paternalistic and legalistic approach to community affairs, the Vichy government cajoled and bullied the élite of French Jewry to establish the General Union of Israelites in France (known by its French acronym, UGIF). This organization immediately became a tool of new persecution, masking extreme dangers behind the comforting veil of philanthropy. UGIF officials helped to succour the Jews who were most in need, but in the long run their work made easier the rounding-up of Jews for deportation and murder. In the most poignant instance, the UGIF organized special homes and foster-parent care for hundreds of children whose parents had been deported. Working largely within the structures permitted by the persecutors, however, the UGIF failed to protect most of its charges when the Gestapo came for them in 1944: indeed, well-kept UGIF lists facilitated the children's capture.

Less susceptible to patriotic illusions, immigrant Jewish leaders better grasped the seriousness of their plight and moved more quickly into underground activity. Psychologically better prepared for their ordeal, they strove to unify Jewish responses. The Jewish resistance movement drew largely upon this milieu. First in the field, Jewish Communists mounted the most violent and extensive challenge to the persecutors. But other Jewish groups also mobilized – Bundists, Zionists and the Jewish scout movement. All of these, even the Communists, asserted the importance of a collective Jewish response, although they often differed on matters of strategy. So much of their activity could only be symbolic, with little practical help for the victims. And to the last, the Jews disagreed about the symbols. For the Communists, most notably, the Jewish cause was part of the titanic struggle against the Hitlerian Reich, in which the Soviet Union was the principal champion of oppressed peoples. Therefore, Jewish Communists made few direct assaults upon the Nazis' machinery of destruction: they blew up no deportation trains, assassinated no SS Jewish affairs specialists, and left it to others to liberate the camp of Drancy, the French antechamber to Auschwitz.

Even the most clear-sighted had few answers for the Jews caught in the Nazis' prison. Judging now, with a full sense of how illusory were most appreciations of contemporary realities, we ought to be charitable when considering how Jewish leaders responded. This reflection is prompted by a reading of the remarkable wartime notebook of Raymond-Raoul Lambert, the effective head of the UGIF in the southern zone of France. Skilfully edited by Richard Cohen, a historian at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Lambert's diary permits a look at the inner world of a highly assimilated Jewish official up to the moment of his arrest, with his entire family, in the summer of 1943 – leading to their murder in Auschwitz shortly after. Lambert appears before us as an outstanding example of established Jewry: a voracious reader, he repeatedly drew solace from the nationalist (and antisemitic) writer Maurice Barrès; forever optimistic, he constantly found reason to believe that France would assert her liberal traditions against Nazi infamy; devoted to his family, he named his fourth child, born in January 1942, Marie-France.

Lambert's perceptions of his own role can perhaps be ridiculed when seen from our standpoint: he obstinately refused to acknowledge that barbarism had become the rule for the Jews, and that his endless efforts to lobby at Vichy meant nothing to the men in charge; he was far too trusting of Xavier Vallat, the antisemite in charge of French Jewish policy; he was rock certain of his own role, like many Jewish leaders enticed into high position in what was really the apparatus of persecution. But Lambert reveals himself in these pages as utterly authentic: he truly felt he was doing his best for his fellow Jews; he genuinely believed there was no alternative but to maintain intact the structure of communal institutions and deal directly with the Germans and French; he refused to abandon his work on behalf of the foreign Jews, the internees and the deportees themselves. Lambert scrambled about to the last – pleading on behalf of those whom he felt could be saved, literally until the trains carried their victims away. Near the end, he may well have recognized how mistaken had been his assessment of the situation; he worked closely with several resistance activists, and may have been intimately involved in underground operations as some cryptic entries suggest. But tragedy remains the leitmotif: Lambert was unquestionably wrong in his judgments about the Jews, but his efforts represented a noble refusal to escape or submit to the forces that overwhelmed them.

The will to survive

A. J. Sherman

DAVID G. ROSKIES
Against the Apocalypse: Responses to catastrophe in modern Jewish culture
374pp. Harvard University Press. £17.
0 674 00915 0

However odd it was of God to choose the Jews, Jewish survival down the millennia remains one of the world's great mysteries, compelling wonder and a kind of grudging admiration even among those who would prefer the Jews to disappear. David G. Roskies offers an explanation of how this was achieved. In *Against the Apocalypse*, he presents a literature (almost entirely unknown to non-Jews) that expresses the Jews' stubborn will to survive. In so doing, he plausibly shows how loss and destruction, uprooting and death (endlessly repeated in collective experience) were somehow accommodated within the Jewish psyche; expressed in the liturgy and commemorated in ritual they re-established continuity with the past and provided some hope for the future.

In his survey of Jewish literature, with special emphasis on works arising from the unique devastations of this century in Eastern Europe, Roskies initially analyses traditions of response to catastrophe embedded in liturgy, accessible and familiar to any Jew in the pre-modern era. With each disaster experienced as if it had predecessors and biblical analogues – a massacre or expulsion as if it were punishment visited by God on rebellious Israel; each destroyed community recalling the Roman destruction of Jerusalem – Jews were able to make some sense of calamity, drawing meaning and strength from repeated blows that might otherwise have utterly demoralized them. Historical events, Roskies reminds us, were felt and absorbed without regard to their actual details: the archetype for all destructions was the Destruction; the text for all mourning, the Book of Lamentations. For Jews still bound by their traditions, no events were random: even the direst catastrophe was part of a lesson that, despite its terrors, had redemptive implications. Going to their separate anguished deaths, Jews were sustained by specific instances of earlier martyrs, exemplars of piety and faith whose names and last words were intimately familiar from the prayer-book.

Devoting the largest part of his study to literature created mostly in Eastern Europe in the late nineteenth century and after, Roskies describes how the older Jewish tradition of almost fatalistic acceptance of apocalyptic events was shattered by secularism that deprived pogroms of their mythic character. With the exposure of the hermetic Jewish world to the currents of emancipation, new literary forms also appeared: satires, parodies, ironic arguments written in Hebrew, Yiddish and even European vernaculars that attempted to extrude God from Jewish history. Feeling themselves abandoned by even an angry God, Jewish writers were also bereft of the nourishing comforts of community: the Jewries of Russia, the Ukraine and Poland were riven by bitter antagonisms between Hasidim and rationalists, rich and poor, the educated and the ignorant. Most damaging to Jewish tradition perhaps was the liberal and then socialist ideology that harshly criticized ancient assumptions and encouraged disaffected youth, dazzled by European literature and philosophy, to desert the prayer-houses and Talmudical academies for the wider world. The only constant in these decades of social, religious and intellectual upheaval was the relentless persecution that seemed, despite all evidence of enlightenment and progress elsewhere, to re-enact, in Eastern Europe, patterns of ancient destruction.

The shock of successive and increasingly savage pogroms in Russia led to a new genre, the pogrom poem, written in Hebrew and Yiddish. Despite its consciously subversive programme (occasionally blasphemous, always shocking) it ironically remained very much within the form that subordinated particular details of time and place to timeless archetypes that would not have been unfamiliar to earlier rabbinic poets. The "sustaining values of redemption and retribution" may have been rejected, but the pogrom poem was still addressed solely to a Jewish audience, and was, by its very nature, part of the continuing tradition that its authors – Bialik, Leivick, Markish, Layeles, to name the most prominent – aimed to jettison. Roskies traces the development of yet another form of literary response, which came into its own after events such as the Kishinev pogrom in 1903: an angry refusal to call on even an inscrutable God, but, instead, issuing a cry for vengeance, militant preparedness and self-defence. Jewish communities suffered unprecedented devastation during the Great War and the Russian Revolution; when destruction had become universal, notions of sin, retribution and redemption seemed merely irrelevant. Isaac Babel, for whom the Red Cavalry was both symbol and vehicle of sustained, universal violence, represented the outstanding example of a radical break with the Jewish past. The ability to kill, cut off from all the communal ties and ancient inhibitions, became for him the touchstone of a full acceptance of life.

In the Nazi-created ghettos of the Second World War, writing – an act of faith, implying an audience to be addressed still in Hebrew, Yiddish or Polish – came to be the last testament for many writers, part of a survival strategy. Roskies sees the Holocaust itself as its own archetype when, in 1942, "they took away the children, because without the children there was no hope whatsoever". Abraham Sutzkever, a partisan fighter and leader of the Vilna ghetto, wrote within and about the Holocaust, and never ceased to insist that writing mattered, that creating art in the midst of destruction was imperative. He knew also that his audience and his culture were perishing about him. Roskies's discussion of Sutzkever's work, and translations of his poetry, will bring to a wider audience his stern message that suffering must somehow be transmuted into beauty.

In the graphic works of Samuel Bak and Yosl Bergner, with which Roskies concludes his book, we see the ultimate break with tradition, and the creation of a new vision of catastrophe: in a haunting canvas by Bergner entitled "Destination X", objects looted from Jewish homes – endless ranks of chairs, mirrors, wardrobes, and samovars – are seen marching into exile, disciplined though leaderless, without destination, under a lowering sky. With such works, Roskies contends, destruction has been fashioned "into a new set of tablets" and the apocalypse is thus not merely commemorated and mourned, but somehow transcended.

Roskies's work, densely argued, richly allusive, exemplary in its far-ranging scholarship, is itself a deeply felt response to the Holocaust and its memories; an affirmation of continuities as well as violent endings. It is none the less suffused with sadness, for, as he himself tells us, "as surely as this is a book written in English, the language of the most recent Jewish dispersion, this just as certain that the culture described here is gone". David Roskies has drawn for us a map to a vanished continent.

On record

M. R. D. Foot

VERA LASKA
Nazism, Resistance and Holocaust in World War Two: A bibliography
183pp. Scarecrow Press. $15.
0 8108 1771 3

Ever since the Nazis' thousand-year Reich collapsed in ruins after twelve years and a quarter, in May 1945, German historians have wrestled with the problem of what went wrong. In every country the Nazis occupied, the history of resistance to them has been a booming academic and local sub-industry. Academics in the English-speaking countries, embarrassed that their own parents did not have to face the ordeals of occupation, are now beginning to grapple with its historical problems. This booklist, with some 2,000 items, will provide a most valuable starting guide.

Vera Laska was herself lucky to escape the Holocaust. Czech-born, she was moved on from Auschwitz to make munitions for the Wehrmacht in the tunnel near Nordhausen; which she correctly calls infamous. She now teaches at Regis College, Weston, Massachusetts. Her thirteen chapters cover Jews and antisemitism; Nazism; resistance; women in resistance (on whom she has written); Jewish resistance; the Holocaust; women in the Holocaust; women in hiding; "Pre-1945 knowledge of the Holocaust", a tricky subject; war crimes; art and photographs; philosophy and interpretation; and literature. Addenda bring her listings up to the autumn of 1984, and she indexes the authors she cites. Her scholarship is sound, she is not easily taken in and her occasional comments are telling.

Going by the rules

Avishai Margalit

COLIN McGINN
Wittgenstein on Meaning: An interpretation of evaluation
202pp. Oxford: Blackwell. £12.50.
0 631 13764 5
G.P. BAKER and P.M.S. HACKER
Scepticism, Rules and Language
140pp. Oxford: Blackwell. £15.
0 631 13414 2

Once upon a time, say in Descartes's time, a philosopher would write a book, and then conduct an intensive correspondence with friends and colleagues who sent to him their counter-arguments in personal letters. The philosophical community has grown since then, and articles in learned journals have come to replace the personal letters. Lately, however, it seems that a new genre is being developed: immediate and polemical responses to a new book themselves appear in book form.

The two books under review exemplify this new genre. They are both mainly concerned to reply to Kripke's influential recent book about rules according to Wittgenstein (Saul Kripke, *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language*, 1982), although both contain scholarly exegesis on Wittgenstein himself, meant to be contrasted with that of Kripke.

The reason for the development of this new genre may be the greater industry of the writers of today. Or perhaps the writers of today are rather in Pascal's situation, when he apologized for writing at length, having had no time to write briefly. Be that as it may, the topic of rules according to Wittgenstein, and Kripke's interpretation of it, are most deserving of the extensive philosophical attention they are currently receiving. The reason: the importance of the topic and the stature of the writers.

The philosophical picture according to which not only the behaviour of human beings but even their cognition is guided by rules has become the formative picture in the "cognitive" human sciences, notably in theoretical linguistics, psychology and anthropology. This way of seeing matters does not owe its origin to the currently popular modelling of the human brain on the computer: it goes all the way back to Kant. Kant was aware of the problem which is central to Wittgenstein's treatment of rules, namely the problem of the application of a rule. According to Kant human beings are endowed with a faculty of judgment enabling them to tell those cases that can be subsumed under the rule from those that cannot, much as a judge is called upon to do. However, this faculty of judgment, according to Kant, is not itself rule-guided. For had it been itself guided by rules, we would have needed, in each case, a rule telling us whether the given case is subsumable under the rule in question, and another rule telling us that the rule we have just applied is indeed applicable to the particular rule we are considering, and so on *ad infinitum*. (Plato's argument, known as "the third man", regarding the application of a general concept of a particular case, is analogous in structure.)

Wittgenstein according to Kripke may be interpreted as having asked the Kantian question, "What constitutes the faculty of judgment?" His sceptical answer is: nothing. No psychological or biological fact can explain the judgment as to whether or not in a specific case the behaviour is according to a given rule. Wittgenstein, according to Kripke, proposes a sceptical solution to the problem of what is a rule and what is rule-guided behaviour. This solution refers inherently to a community. Obeying a rule is not a private matter, it is not a matter for individualistic psychology. There are no private rules, and there is no private language.

If Wittgenstein (according to this interpretation) is right, then the current cognitive picture in the human sciences, a picture based on rule-guided individualistic psychology, is fundamentally flawed. The stake in a discussion of rules and rule-guided behaviour is therefore high. It reaches far beyond philosophy.

The two books under review agree that the notion of rules is central to Wittgenstein and central to philosophy. They disagree about virtually everything else. They disagree with Kripke's interpretation of Wittgenstein, and they also disagree with each other. Each of the books is written in the full confidence that it presents the correct interpretation to Wittgenstein. Kripke, in contrast, was modest about his interpretation, saying about the product that it is "Wittgenstein's argument as it struck Kripke, as it presented a problem for him" (Kripke, p 5).

The two books take up very different attitudes to Kripke. Colin McGinn criticizes him with respect, and with the utmost attention to detail. He finds Kripke's interpretation interesting, although mistaken and misleading: misleading as an interpretation of Wittgenstein, mistaken as an argument on its own. G. P. Baker and P. M. S. Hacker, on the other hand, would probably be willing to apply to Kripke's interpretation of Wittgenstein the words of the prophet Isaiah: "From the sole of the foot even to the head there is no soundness in it." Kripke's account, in all its forms and formulations, is to them a collection of gross mistakes of the sort Wittgenstein himself fought against in his *Philosophical Investigations*.

The irony is that the two books attack Kripke from two opposite directions. Dr Baker and Dr Hacker attack him for having ignored, or misunderstood, the normative status of rule obedience according to Wittgenstein. Mr McGinn argues, in contrast, that Kripke gives too much consideration to the normativeness of rule obedience and pays too little attention to the blind and reactive nature of obedience according to Wittgenstein. The impression one may end up with is similar to that often formed in the realm of politics: a policy which is sharply attacked from both the extreme right and the extreme left sometimes comes to be seen as more correct and better balanced as a result.

Kripke focuses his interpretation on what

Wittgenstein in Vienna in the late 1920s, taken from Wittgenstein: Sein Leben in Bildern and Texten *compiled by Michael Nedo and Michele Ranchetti (393pp. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp).*

Wittgenstein refers to as "our paradox", namely

> no course of action could be determined by a rule, because every course of action can be made out to accord with every rule (*Philosophical Investigation*, 201).

Kripke treats this as a deep sceptical paradox and as a central theme in Wittgenstein's thought. Wittgenstein's famous argument against the possibility of a private language is, according to Kripke, a special case of this paradox. Kripke offers an interpretation of it by using an arithmetical example. But the paradox has a general, not just a mathematical character, and I therefore prefer the exposition in terms of a different example, which Kripke notes but does not develop. This is Nelson Goodman's riddle, taken as a riddle concerning not induction but meaning.

The riddle is based on two hypotheses:
(1) All emeralds are green
(2) All emeralds are grue
(where "grue" means "green before the year 2500 and blue afterwards" – I have post-dated Goodman's original formulation in order to ensure that none of us will be around to apply the terms after the date in question).

Goodman's problem is which hypothesis ought to be adopted. Or, alternatively, which hypothesis is to be rationally believed – given that every emerald we examine which provides confirming evidence for (1) is also confirming evidence for (2). In short, the answer to the question of what is rational for us to believe is under-determined on the basis of our total evidence.

The assumption underlying Goodman's riddle is that the meaning of "green" and of "grue" is fixed, and the question is what to accept (or what to believe). Kripke's riddle as an interpretation of Wittgenstein concerns the assumption about the meaning of "green" and "grue": when I state (1) how do I know that by "green" I mean green and not grue? What types of facts will determine which of the two possible meanings is meant by my use of the term "green"? Kripke examines several candidates and shows that none is adequate to determine which of the two meanings is being employed.

The conclusion of the paradox is that, given all the facts (known as well as unknown), the meaning of "green" in my use is undetermined as between green and grue. The problem, then, is not just that I do not know which facts will be decisive here, but that there are no such facts.

Two questions arise. First, is Kripke's sceptical paradox concerning the meaning of "green" an adequate interpretation of Wittgenstein's "our paradox"? Second, whether or not it is an adequate interpretation, is this sceptical paradox interesting and important in its own right?

The answer both books give to the first question is negative: this is not the way to interpret Wittgenstein; this is not Wittgenstein's problem. According to the authors, if one were to read carefully the rest of the paragraph in which Wittgenstein speaks of "our paradox" one would realize that he himself saw the problem as based on a misunderstanding, having to do with the idea that the understanding of a rule is always a matter for interpretation – that is, it always calls for a verbal formulation of the rule.

As for the second question, here the two books diverge. McGinn believes that Kripke's problem is interesting but has a straight solution. Kripke, he believes, has simply not exhausted all the possible types of facts that could be brought to bear on the question of determining which sense of "green," is meant in (1). He has, for example, ignored or rejected without argument the idea that there are facts about meaning which are irreducible to other facts, and according to which "green" means green. McGinn in fact surveys further types of facts which could determine an answer to our question. In my view this is the most interesting and the deepest part of his book.

Baker and Hacker believe that the very posing of the question of which facts would determine in what sense I mean "green" attests to Kripke's serious misunderstanding of Wittgenstein's text, as well as of the problem of meaning in general. According to them Kripke's paradox is not an instance of sceptic-

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ism but of "conceptual nihilism". The question concerning the meaning of an expression is for them not a hypothesis to be confirmed by facts, but rather a matter to be settled by a criterion. To find out what facts would be pertinent for the pinning down of the meaning of "green" in (1) is, for them, like finding out whether some man's being unmarried is a piece of evidence corroborating the hypothesis that he is a bachelor: being unmarried is the criterion, not the evidence, for the application of "bachelor". In Baker and Hacker's view a rule and its application are two sides of the same coin.

However, the case Kripke deals with requires an extension of this metaphor: it is more like two coins of which one side is the same but the other side different. The problem is that this other side is inaccessible, and one has to determine from observing the common side alone which of the two coins one is holding.

For Baker and Hacker matters stand differently. They do not see any problem about the question of the sense in which "green" is used. From Wittgenstein they learn that the meaning of an expression is what occurs in the explanation of its meaning. And, of course, the explanation of the meaning of "green" looks quite different from the explanation of the meaning of "grue". The meaning of "green" was explained to us, among other things, by pointing to the colour of grass, while the introduction of "grue" requires reference to a time point and to the colour blue. It is clearly the sense of green we employ when we use "green", they would conclude, since this sense is what occurs in the explanation we have received and will pass on to our children.

It is the red rag that Baker and Hacker see here, but not the matador. The difficulty Kripke locates is precisely this, that from the explanation of the meaning of "green" – like that obtained from pointing to the colour of grass or emeralds – we cannot tell whether it is an explanation of "green" in the sense of green or of grue. The very same examples would serve for the introduction of "green" and of "grue". To be sure, Baker and Hacker would reply that this is ludicrous, and insist that no speaker of English has ever received an explanation of the meaning of "green" which contains a reference to a time point.

But the sceptic persists. Suppose, he says, the situation in England was once such that while the Normans were green-and-blue speakers, the Saxons grew up on grue and bleen (where "bleen" is what the Normans call blue until 2500 AD and green thereafter). The Normans gradually had the upper hand and the expressions "grue" and "bleen" disappeared; the populations have at the same time completely intermingled. Now you, the reader, ask yourself whether your own use of "green" is the Norman or the Saxon one. Well, you are likely to reply, I suppose I use it in the Norman way, since no one has ever referred to a time point (namely the year 2500) in teaching me the meaning of "green": had I been a Saxon I would have had to be aware of the year 2500 as relevant to my use of "green".

But would you? On reflection you will realize that perhaps it is the Norman who would have to be aware of the year 2500, since his "green" is of course the Saxon's grue until 2500 and bleen thereafter, while you, a Saxon raised on "green" in the sense of grue, are in no need of such an explanation. And so on. The symmetry between Normans and Saxons in this version of the story is complete. And this is the problem brought out by the sceptical paradox.

The story is told of the Cynic Diogenes that when he was presented with Zeno's paradoxes precluding the possibility of motion, he got out of the barrel and started to run: "Here is motion!" There is a serious sense in which Diogenes' response manifests a misunderstanding of the problem. The problem was to pin-point what is wrong in a seemingly natural description of motion which ends up with the conclusion that motion is impossible (eg: In order to pass from A to B you first have to traverse half the distance, say to C, but then you first have to traverse half the distance from A to C and so on *ad infinitum*).

Baker and Hacker's response to Kripke's paradox, viz "conceptual nihilism: after all we do talk", is similar to Diogenes' running. It is a refusal to see the problem. And the problem, very generally, is that the concept of meaning, under some rather natural descriptions of it (including descriptions of normative facts of the sort Baker and Hacker demand), leads to paradoxical conclusions.

According to Kripke, Wittgenstein adopts a sceptical rather than a straight solution to the paradox of meaning. A straight solution consists of the rejection of the conclusion on the basis of the analysis of the premises. This for example is the way we go about Zeno's paradoxes. A sceptical solution does not find a way to avoid the conclusion. At the same time our daily beliefs and practices are justified because they "need not require the justification the sceptic has shown to be untenable". And on Kripke's interpretation the claim that you use "green" in the sense of green is *justified* if your use accords with that of the other speakers in the community who use "green".

Both the books under review reject this justification as an interpretation of Wittgenstein. They believe there is nothing in Wittgenstein which suggests that the attribution of a rule requires an essential reference to the community. When Wittgenstein says that there is no private rule, the contrast he has in mind is that between "private" in the sense of internal and "public" in the sense of external – and not that of "private" in the sense of individual as opposed to social.

The two books are very different in their style. Baker and Hacker's style is abrasive, sardonic, replete with exclamation marks, staccato slogans, and words like "prestidigitation" and "legerdemain". They remind one of two new boys in the neighbourhood who have decided to take on the big boys: Dummett in their books on Frege, Chomsky in their book on language, and now Kripke. They dare because they believe their big brother Wittgenstein is on their side.

McGinn's book is detailed and its tone critical but not hostile. There are intentional repetitions in it, meant to enable a separation of interpretation and criticism. The notes are often more relaxed and interesting than the body of the text. It is written with the sort of journalistic dexterity which is responsive to the interest of the philosophical public. Raisins are sometimes the best part of the pie, but a pile of raisins is not better than the pie. Wittgenstein feared that his philosophical remarks were only a pile of raisins. Kripke, in my view, has baked a pie using Wittgenstein's raisins; these two books want the pile back.

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Names without object

Patricia Clarke

DESMOND PAUL HENRY
That Most Subtle Question (*Quaestio Subtilissima*): The metaphysical bearing of medieval and contemporary linguistic disciplines
337pp. Manchester University Prress. £30.
0719009472

The most subtle question of D. P. Henry's title is "whether the Chimera buzzing about in a vacuum can consume second intentions". It is taken from Rabelais, who offers it as part of a possible title for a medieval philosophical treatise. The present work is a further addition to the series of books and articles in which Dr Henry has sought to elucidate theses in medieval logic and metaphysics, and to relate them to more recent work, using as an aid logical systems developed by the Polish logician Stanislaw Leśniewski (1886–1939). In this latest volume he gives an important place to Boethius of Dacia, a thirteenth-century speculative grammarian, who, like other modistae, held that grammar should be based on metaphysics rather than on actual linguistic use and idiom.

In Henry's opinion the logical systems of Leśniewski provide the sort of logical language envisaged by Boethius, and offer a better means of elucidating medieval philosophical work than alternative systems. Henry makes most use of Leśniewski's *Ontologie*, which corresponds, in part at least, to predicate logic. He extracts an axiom for ontology from the work of the eleventh-century writer Garland the Computist; and considers a number of topics treated by medieval authors, including those facetiously alluded to by Rabelais, viz, whether "empty names" are really names and whether they have meaning; and the nature and status of universals.

Henry's treatments of medieval views are instructive and illuminating. His claim that the authors he considers, when closely and sympathetically studied, are often found to be concerned with issues which have also preoccupied more modern writers, is amply vindicated. It is less clear that the analyses he offers always capture the sense of the views he discusses as closely as he suggests. I do not think, for example, that he completely captures Garland's account of certain singular syllogisms. Part of the trouble is that the account is not fully coherent; but in addition Henry uses a symbolism in which no distinction is marked between proper names and common nouns, whereas Garland holds that the syllogisms in question are valid *ex vi terminorum*, that is to say, given the context, because all their terms are proper names.

Henry claims in this book, as he has claimed elsewhere, that "empty names", ie, ostensible names which do not refer or apply to anything, are nevertheless meaningful. In his opinion, it is a "logically gratuitous assumption" that such "empty names" have no meaning, and to make it is "to separate oneself from the rest of mankind, who never have any qualms as to the meaningfulness of those myths or novels which they read, and which are replete with empty proper and other sorts of name".

The real target of this attack is the view that a proper name has to have a bearer. Henry is right that the names of fictional characters, places, etc, can be used meaningfully, and that we should not be able to understand the stories about them if this were not so. But the matter is more complicated than he acknowledges. He offers no satisfactory account of the truth conditions of statements about fictional characters made in stories about them. He seems to assume that they match exactly those of similar statements about real people, as though names of fictional characters could be used on the very same terms as names of real people. Given the truth conditions Henry spells out for propositions of his basic "a is b" form, all statements about Mr Pickwick, when taken to be of that form, will be false, simply because Mr Pickwick never existed, and regardless of whether they accord with Dickens's narrative or not.

The agency game

Kathleen Lennon

DOROTHY EMMET
The Effectiveness of Causes
136pp. Macmillan. £15.
0333366328

Dorothy Emmet is unhappy with an account of causation as a relationship between events which holds simply in virtue of their being particular instances of kinds of events linked by general laws. Such a conception may help us make predictions, but it leaves out the effectiveness of causes, and the process of change: "an adequate view of causation will have to show change as involving *transition*, and not only change as defined as difference of properties at different times".

Professor Emmet claims that agency (initially human) cannot be captured in terms of event causation. When we act "there is not something in us causing something else in us, but something that we ourselves are doing with ourselves". As agents we have experiences of making things happen. Here is the clue to what underlies all causal relations. The existence of events "depends on them having participants whose adventures they record, and if causation is something which happens in the real world, it will come through the actions . . . of these participants on each other".

There is much obscurity here, and Emmet's book does nothing to disperse it. The activity of the participants of events is not of course intentional, but is that in which causality really consists: "we do indeed talk about event causation, but this is shorthand for talking about transactions among their participants". Such a view could only be assessed if Emmet had provided us with the *links* between the shorthand and the longhand, and some account of the transactions concerned.

Emmet then introduces a distinction between immanent and transeunt causation. The former is a process of change (of continuity) which something goes through without dependency on outside causes. Transeunt causation involves the activity of outside causes. Intentional action appears to be an example of immanent causation, as does the growth and development of organisms, and, maybe, the behaviour of quantum phenomena. In many cases immanent causation may be explicable in terms of transeunt causation of the *parts* of an organism; but ultimately immanent causation is regarded as the more fundamental. Here the internal nature of a system is revealed by changes "carrying forward a pattern, perhaps in a rhythmic reiterative form". Emmet claims in the book that causal relations are to be understood in terms of dependency and at times utilizes the conditional and counterfactual implications of causal claims. She makes no attempt, however, to articulate immanent causation in a way that would allow such consequences. Without this it is hard to regard "immanent causation" as a form of causation at all, though some other kind of intelligibility may be gained by the recognition of certain patterns in the world. Until we are given some further articulation of immanent causality, however, her suggestion that it might capture the interaction between mind and body, or even the immanence of the divine in the world, will remain an attempt to illuminate the mysterious by the even more mysterious.

Getting into gear

Michael Lockwood

MITSUMASA ANNO and AKIHIRO NOZAKI
Anno's Hat Tricks
44pp. Bodley Head. £6.95.
0370308492

Tom, Hannah and you are all wearing hats. None has seen, or can see, his own hat; but all know that the hats come from a box that initially contained two white and three red hats. Each can see the others' hats and you can see that both Tom and Hannah have red hats. Tom and Hannah are asked if they can work out what colour hats they are wearing. "No", Tom replies; whereupon Hannah says "I can't tell either." What, then, is the colour of your hat?* This is one of eleven such problems, of gradually increasing difficulty, that form the substance of *Anno's Hat Tricks*. The aim is "to introduce young readers to the concept of logic", in particular "the magic of the word 'if'".

Anno, a celebrated illustrator with many picture books to his credit, has here teamed up with a teacher of mathematics and computer science. The result is an unusual book with great charm and a gentle manner of exposition calculated to disarm children who might otherwise be put off by repeated appeals to their powers of abstract reasoning. The illustrations are a delight – the figures of Tom and Hannah being varied, sometimes very subtly, from page to page with a marvellous economy of line.

Anno and Nozaki intend their book to help train children in the discipline of thinking out carefully what does and what does not follow logically from certain assumptions – *even assumptions that they know to be false*. For, of course, what Tom and Hannah know is different from what the reader knows. It is a crucial feature of these puzzles that they require the reader to consider what is implied by the fact that others are or are not able to draw certain inferences: the reader has to put himself in Tom's and Hannah's shoes. The capacity to do this has recently been the subject of some interesting research. Very young children are far worse at problems that call for this kind of imagination than one would expect, given the other things they can do. Moreover, autistic children, even those who score highly on conventional intelligence tests, are spectacularly bad at such tasks – so much so that failure at them has been proposed as a way of diagnosing autism (and even as providing a crucial clue to the nature of this mysterious condition).

Whatever its more serious aims, however, a children's book is nothing if it is not enjoyable to read – ideally for parents as well as children. As will be clear from the example cited above, the average adult is likely to find some of the problems in this book quite challenging; but at the same time all but the dullest child should be intrigued by the book and, given that it is nicely paced and that the underlying principles are very clearly explained, should with patience be able to make reasonable headway with it. The problems could even be turned into a game using paper hats (better, surely, than the "cardboard cutouts" that the book suggests).

*From the fact that Tom cannot tell the colour of his own hat, Hannah can infer that her hat and yours cannot both be white. If your hat was white, therefore, she would be able to draw the further inference that her own hat was red. Since she can't, your hat must be red.

From Anno's Hat Tricks

Worthy objects

Julia Briggs

When so many stories have already been told, the illustrator may be forced to look elsewhere for her material. The American artist Aliki makes use of an alternative approach that focuses on *Feelings*, with the intention of helping young children to explore them and come to terms with them. Her book consists of strip cartoons or tableaux drawn in a loose, relaxed style, occasionally reminiscent of the *New Yorker*, or of Jules Feiffer. Each episode presents childish (or not so childish) emotion – anger, envy, jealousy, loneliness – and, more positively, happiness, generosity and friendliness. Little birds provide knowing comments on the action: "She's jealous, mommy, she wants attention." "You're clever, dear." By recognizing and identifying particular patterns of behaviour, the child is supposed to be comforted, reassured, perhaps even released from an unresolved problem. Sometimes there is a very simple solution: the bored child, diagnosed by the little birds as "lonely", faces a page headed "Telephone Elizabeth". And so she does. But more complex problems produce more facile answers. The jealous sister whose younger brother claims all the attention is simply told "I see you, dear, you're wonderful". A larger question remains: do children find reassurance in seeing their most intense emotions depicted in a book? Do adults, for that matter? It may be reassuring to know that feelings are shared, and will not possess us for ever (adults understand this better than children), but painful emotions resemble pain itself, for which even books have little in the way of distraction or consolation. Aliki is quick to identify the characteristic passions of childhood, and at times she deftly indicates both sides of the picture: "I am mister bold, brave as mighty mouse" gets the response, "Show off". Visually, the book looks disjointed and rather scrappy. Some of the lettering is too small and the drawing is too weak to convey emotions through facial expressions with any degree of precision.

Jealousy or rivalry seems to be one of the emotions we most often recognize in our children, if the emphasis on it in books is anything to go by – perhaps it is the emotion that parents most often expect or elicit. In *Two Greedy Bears*, a traditional Hungarian folk-tale, each bear suspects the other of doing better until a fox kindly offers to divide their cheese up into equal parts. Like the Marx Brothers trimming the Russian aviator's moustaches, she takes a bit from one side, and then from the other, and never quite manages to even the two sides up, until she has eaten it all except for two indistinguishable crumbs. The illustrations by Jose Aruego and Ariane Dewey simplify bears, fox, cheese and surrounding forest until they all share the same kind of shape, texture and colour – round, soft and lumpy, like an old sock or a furred tongue.

Pat Hutchins has never entirely found a style of her own – or perhaps she prefers to experiment from one book to the next. *The Very Worst Monster* shows her under the spell of Fungus the Bogeyman, so that for the pleasures of recognition must be substituted the more doubtful rewards of fantasy. Yet despite the ubiquitous pointed ears and long green toenails, this too turns out to be yet another story of sibling rivalry – *My Naughty Little Sister* in bogeyland. Ma and Pa Monster think that the new baby, Billy, is so bad that they enter him for the Worst Monster Baby in the World Competition, but older sister Hazel is determined to prove that she is really the worst, and gives him away – which is, of course, what all older sisters would like to do to their younger siblings. It is reassuring, though also mildly disappointing, to find that the monster world mirrors our own so closely.

Erik Blegvad, who has drawn the pictures for *Anna Banana and Me*, is a highly accomplished and professional illustrator. His work is always sensitive and evocative, he understands the importance of viewpoint (for example, there is a dramatic perspective down a stairwell) and his colour and line are always highly atmospheric. Here he uses a heavier line and more voguish Sendakian cross-hatching than in earlier books, but these telling drawings of children, plants and townscapes are a delight to look at. The story itself is slight – Anna Banana is a fearless little girl whose company is joyful, thrilling and frightening by turns – but the pictures convey exhilaration and a sense of magic.

Finally Astrid Lindgren's *My Nightingale is Singing*, illustrated by Svend Otto S. in those soft-toned water colours which are so well handled by Scandinavian artists, is a book that touches on a number of painful topics with an uncharacteristically heavy hand and resolves them with a piece of facile mythologizing. When Maria is orphaned, she has to go to the workhouse, with the old paupers and the idiots of the village. Their noisy sleep, head-banging and demands are vividly conveyed, but throughout, the translation feels all wrong. Does Maria really expect "beauty and fun" in the workhouse? And what does she mean when she wishes for her magic linden to "play"? Perhaps she should have wished for it to "ring", which would at least have rhymed with her desire for the nightingale to sing. Whatever Maria wished for, she achieves it by putting her hands on the tree and magically becoming one with it, which feels rather evasive after the realism of the workhouse. Children may not solve their problems by seeing them presented in strip cartoons, but they don't do it by turning into linden trees either.

Aliki: *Feelings*. Bodley Head. £5.95. 0 670 80366 9.
Mirra Ginsburg: *Two Greedy Bears*. Illustrated by Jose Aruego and Ariane Dewey. Viking/Kestrel. £5.95. 0 670 80366 9.
Pat Hutchins: *The Very Worst Monster*. Bodley Head. £5.25. 0 370 30869 7.
Lenore Blegvad: *Anna Banana and Me*. Illustrated by Erik Blegvad. Collins. £4.95. 0 00 183733 8.
Astrid Lindgren: *My Nightingale is Singing*. Illustrated by Svend Otto S. Methuen. £4.95. 0 416 52060 X.

Four titles from Cicely Mary Barker's Flower Fairy series, first published in the 1920s, have been reissued: *Flower Fairies of the Spring* (48pp. Blackie. £2.95. 0 216 91688 7). . . *of the Summer* (0 216 91689 5). . . *of the Autumn* (0 216 91690 9). . . *of the Winter* (0 216 91687 9) are illustrated by the author, who died in 1973. In each volume a poem is faced by an illustration showing the fairy and the flower. If the verse seems a little refined to have withstood the changes in taste of the past half century ("Red-gold her gown;/ Suntanned she is;/ She wears a crown / Of bryony") the charm of the paintings remains

Slender subjects

Lucy Ellmann

William Stobbs's version of "Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake" drags out the old rhyme, which is traditionally recited to the accompaniment of clapping hands, to the point of stagnation. Either to entertain or alienate, the mother and baby featured in the poem are cats, fancily dressed in Victorian garb and equipped with an exquisite perambulator and other period accoutrements. The Baker's Man is a dog, apparently willing to bake for cats when paid to do so. While the mother instructs the baker on culinary matters ("Pat it", says one page), Stobbs improvises some antics for the baby: eating, drinking and disappearing from sight while the mother remains cheerful. This ineffectual, if cake-procuring, mother-figure successfully overcomes the problem, of the inhibitory parental presence, usually most unwelcome in children's literature. It is a brave endeavour, but what with the baby's naughtiness, the baker's nastiness, the olde worlde flavour, and the impossibility of turning the pages fast enough to maintain the rhythm, Stobbs's inventiveness ends up offering inappropriate nourishment to a slender subject.

Teddy's Birthday, by Amanda Davidson, is similarly elaborate, with forty-eight illustrations, many repetitive, of a simple story. A toy bear who is supposed to remain in the sitting-room notices the postman's arrival, wonders about the abundance of letters delivered to his door, smells something delicious, discovers scissors and wrapping paper in a cupboard. All is explained when he goes upstairs and finds birthday cards, a cake, presents – in fact, a surprise party, organized by his three toy friends. Gaily coloured and humorously [illegible] tions of party paraphernalia makes for a pleasant book, suitable for any young reader wishing to bone up on birthday celebration procedures.

Jungle animals feature prominently in the four humorous, semi-educational books by Rodney Peppé which have recently been reissued. Peppé avails himself of lively pictorial techniques within a consistent clarity of style. His unpretentious use of collage is charming in *Puzzle Book*'s "leaf animals" (dried leaves with drawn faces and feet). In his *Circus Numbers*, the seven acrobats are jauntily attired in collaged floral outfits, while elsewhere a hundred rather more scantily adorned fingerprints produce the memorable image of a hundred perfectly rounded elephants. Taking such liberties with materials adds a carefree zest to the well-worn theme of the circus, and relieves this counting book's mildly pedantic stance.

Robert Crowther too is keen to make learning fun. His *Most Amazing Hide-and-Seek Alphabet Book* opened up the new found land of pop-up books when it was first published in 1977, and since then an amazing counting book and now an amazing opposites book have followed. In the alphabet book, Crowther's comical animals appear in colourful variety from behind large black letters, three or four per page. Many perform vaguely characteristic activities, thus providing tit-bits of natural history while exercising the small fingers of the reader: the ape swings, the frog and dolphin leap, the koala slips down the trunk of a "k", hen and woodpecker peck, and the snake and tortoise respectively extend tongue or head. The bold, precise lay-out, and sense of adventure (the animals are completely hidden until forced to move) of this first book are somewhat lost in Crowther's light-hearted *Most Amazing Hide-and-Seek Opposites Book*, which presents a more extravagant display, or disarray. This allows scope for some excellent foliage and busy aquatic scenes, but the opposites in question are often difficult to discern in the underbrush. Differentiating between light and heavy is not easy on paper. It is unclear whether the pelican is eating or losing the fish in its bill, which is neither "full" nor "empty", despite the caption. Crowther, moreover, rashly dictates his own notion of beauty, illustrated by a gorilla holding an ornate bird ("ugly-pretty"). There seems no purpose in implying that matters of taste can be decided with the same certainty with which one distinguishes up from down.

More original as a toy-maker than as a teacher, Crowther expands on the paper techniques of his previous books. An intricate mechanism lifts a flamingo into flight, while the last page presents the posterior of a hippopotamus which can be raised and lowered in a suggestive manner, if so desired. A noise-producing pop-up in the form of a snake makes a grating sound (not quite a rattle). The tongue of the "awake-asleep" iguana recedes as its eye closes, and ants flee from an ant-eater. Besides ant-hunting, Crowther's creatures are constantly catching fish, but this hard-hitting portrayal of the natural world fails to make *The Amazing etc* . . . the opposite of an amiable book.

William Stobbs: *Pat-a-Cake, Pat-a-Cake*. Bodley Head. £4.95. 0 370 30674 0.
Amanda Davidson: *Teddy's Birthday*. Collins. £3.95. 0 00 195829 1.
Rodney Peppé: *Puzzle Book*. Viking/Kestrel. £5.50. 0 670 60261 2.
Rodney Peppé: *Circus Numbers*. Viking/Kestrel. £5.95. 0 670 80025 2.
Robert Crowther: *The Most Amazing Hide-and-Seek Opposites Book*. Viking/Kestrel. £7.95. 0 670 80121 6.

Journals received

Literature

The Bulletin of Hispanic Studies
Volume LXI No 3: July 1984
£14 per year. Liverpool University Press, PO Box 147, Liverpool L69 3BX.

The *BHS* (founded 1923) is a quarterly review devoted to critical studies of literature in Castilian, Portuguese and Catalan, mainly Castilian. A representative issue was the festschrift published last July in honour of A. A. Parker, the foremost "Golden Age" specialist in the English-speaking world: it consists of some twenty-four articles on topics in sixteenth and seventeenth-century Spanish literature, contributed by some of the leading scholars in the field.

The journal has published the most important articles on the major debates in British Hispanism, and notably on the absorbing argument, dominated by Professor Parker himself and to some extent reviewed in this tribute to him, about the moral and aesthetic values bequeathed by Counter-Reformation Spain. This argument has constantly returned to the elucidation of the moral dilemmas raised in the drama of Calderon, and about a third of the articles here deal with the playwright.

The *BHS* is traditionally conservative and cautious in its editorial policy and this, combined with its unassailable pre-eminence, sometimes exasperates "radicals". But the Bulletin's image reflects the general strengths and weaknesses of Hispanism, particularly the fact that the great debate about Counter-Reformation civilization has over the years drained talent from other areas, and concentrated too much attention on issues of universal moral relevance at the expense of linguistics and linguistic awareness, critical theory and political and historical analysis (all things which exist in Hispanism, but in some way peripherally). Presumably the claims of language, history and politics, even of commerce and science (Hispanists publicize the practical importance of the language, but resist the consequences of this defence) will be pressed more intensely on British Hispanism in the future and the challenge to traditional scholarship will be a powerful one.

Oxford German Studies
Volume 15; 1984: Johann Wolfgang von Goethe
£6.50/DM40 per issue. Willem A. Meeuws, Wightwick, Bours Hill, Oxford OX1 5DR.

Oxford German Studies began life as a journal of the Clarendon Press. It was axed for financial reasons, but brought back to life by Oxford teachers of German and its present publisher, and flourishes as a triumphant example of small-scale academic enterprise. In this issue most of the nine essays are based on lectures given at Oxford in the Goethe anniversary year 1982, and all are concerned with poetry and poetic creativity in the lyrics both early and late, in Goethe's Homeric fragments, and in *Faust*. The exclusion of virtually all his prose works and other plays has produced a more unified and single-minded volume than the title suggests. The most complex piece is Gerhard Neumann's semiotic study of the place of tears and pain in *Der west-östliche Divan* and the fragments excluded from it by the poet; the most pleasurable is T. J. Reed's "Poetry and the Shape of Experience: The Poet as Nature" on the processes at work in the early lyrics.

Timothy McFarland

Music

Contemporary Music Review
Volume 1, Part 1; 1984
$70 per volume. Harwood Academic Publishers GmbH, c/o STBS Ltd, 42 William IV Street, London WC2N 4DE.

The musical orthodoxies of the 1950s and 60s have now largely disappeared. In their place is a new diversity which has flourished largely unexamined and without the theoretical underpinning of past decades. The ratio of intelligent commentary to composition and performance has until now declined markedly.

Contemporary Music Review, under the composer Nigel Osborne, of the University of Nottingham, provides informed background to broad themes in contemporary musicology. Future issues will include appraisals of Varèse, dance, opera, psychoacoustics and new methods of auditive analysis. The series begins, though, quite properly, with accounts of Pierre Boulez's IRCAM.

The Institut de Recherche et Coordination Acoustique/Musique, founded in 1974, set out to bring together scientists, composers and musicians concerned with the synthesis of various musics with new technologies of sound production. Boulez has never sought to found a new academic consensus, nor to establish his own Bayreuth, as the composer Luciano Berio confirms elsewhere.

The Institut has seldom concerned itself with the causal relationships of musical style and technological means, more often with functional aspects. In his introductory "View of Music at IRCAM", Tod Machover stresses the "neutrality" of the Institut's approach to technology. The impression underlying all the pieces in the volume, largely self-analytic work by York Höller, Jonathan Harvey (whose "Reflection after Composition" is worth reading), J-B. Barrière, Tristan Murail and others, is of a desire to see music only in terms of specific technical procedures.

Boulez's achievement, as well as making music more rigorously crafted, is to make it more democratic. IRCAM marked a return to theory, but theory which emerged as part of individual musical processes rather than as ideology. That is reflected in *CMR*; there are few nostrums and few metaphysical postures, no doctrinaire hammerings.

Brian Morton

In microform

Heraclitus Ridens was a magazine of ribaldry and burlesque news which appeared weekly from 1681–82. It is the earliest title in the microfilm collection of seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth-century journals, published by University Microfilms International, though it is not by any means "the earliest British periodical", as the publishers state in their catalogue.

English Literary Periodicals consists of twenty-two units, each of which contains approximately 100,000 pages – an indication not only of the scope of the collection but also of the vast capacity of microform. UMI boasts that English Literary Periodicals includes "almost every periodical published before 1800"; these include Steele's *Tatler* (1709–11), the *Spectator* (1711–14) and the *Guardian* (1713), as well as their less well-known imitators.

As a supplement to English Literary Periodicals, UMI has brought out Early British Periodicals, an even larger collection which contains the complete run of the *Gentleman's Magazine* (1731–1907), a digest founded by Edward Cave (see Brian Vickers, *TLS*, January 7, 1983). The original intention, as the editor explained in his first issue, was to offer "a view of all the pieces of wit, humour or intelligence, daily offered to the public in the newspapers". By the end of the decade, however, the Magazine was less dependent on other publications providing copy; it had found Samuel Johnson instead. Sometimes he contributed as much as half the material needed for a single issue.

Early British Periodicals comprises 168 magazines, reviews and journals, including the *Quarterly* and *Edinburgh* reviews. In addition, UMI publishes other periodicals collections; details are available from 30–32 Mortimer Street, London W1N 7RA.

James Campbell

Subscription figures given are for individuals: rates may vary for students, libraries, etc. More journals will be reviewed on June 14.

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Astral abundance

Dominik Wujastyk

JONATHAN KATZ (General Editor)
A Descriptive Catalogue of the Sanskrit and Other Indian Manuscripts of the Chandra Shum Shere Collection in the Bodleian Library: Part I, Jyotiḥśāstra
Edited by David Pingree
171pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. Paperback, £25.
0 19 817368 7

When Max Müller died in 1900, his library, including the Sanskrit manuscripts he had used for his famous edition of the Rig-Veda, went not to Oxford, but to Tokyo. (It was later destroyed there in the earthquake of 1923.) To preserve his memory at Oxford, a group of friends and admirers, including King Edward VII, created a Max Müller memorial fund to promote the study of ancient India.

In 1907, A. A. Macdonell, then Professor of Sanskrit at Oxford, set off for India with £100 of this fund in order to buy manuscripts for the Bodleian Library. As he later reported: "I was put in communication by Mahāmahopādhyāya Haraprasād Śāstrī, when I arrived in Benares, with a Brahmin possessing a large library . . . ." The collection consisted of over 6,000 manuscripts, and the pandit was ready to sell it for 10,000 rupees (£666). Macdonell could only afford 100 of the more important manuscripts, but he hastened back to England and alerted the Bodleian Library to the valuable find. Lord Curzon, at that time Chancellor of the University, was informed of the desirability of acquiring the collection for Oxford. He in turn prevailed upon Sir Chandra Shum Shere, the Prime Minister of Nepal, to buy the collection, and it was presented as a gift to Oxford University in 1909. The collection took the name of its donor. It might be thought that it would more properly be called after the Benares pandit whose library it was, but his name is not known, and it seems to have been suppressed as a condition of sale; future research, perhaps into the papers and financial accounts of Chandra Shum Shere in Nepal, may reveal it.

After the collection arrived in Oxford it was accessioned, arranged and foliated by T. R. Gambier-Parry (who later became the Keeper of the Oriental Department); he spent many years on it, and his patient and precise scholarship is evidenced by the text-critical notes to be found discreetly written in pencil on the fly-leaves bound with many of the manuscripts. He also prepared a detailed handlist of the collection, intended for publication, but he died in 1935, at the age of fifty-two, and his handlist breaks off just three letters short of the end of the alphabet. Although it was completed after his death by E. H. Johnston, Professor of Sanskrit from 1937 to 1942, it was never sent to press, and in spite of his years of scholarly labour Gambier-Parry is largely a forgotten figure in the story of Sanskrit at Oxford. Now, after almost fifty years as the primary finding aid (to those who knew of its existence) for the collection, his work is beginning to be superseded by the publication of the first volume of a descriptive catalogue of the collection.

The plan of the general editor, Jonathan Katz, is to invite Sanskrit scholars to catalogue portions of the collection according to their specialist knowledge of different subjects. Part I, *Jyotiḥśāstra* is by David Pingree, for whom this catalogue of 500 astral manuscripts is merely an adjunct to his larger project, *A Census of the Exact Sciences in Sanskrit* (Philadelphia, 1970–), in which he is listing the tens of thousands of Sanskrit manuscripts on the exact sciences in libraries worldwide.

Because of its special position as a part of Pingree's project, this first volume of the *Chandra Shum Shere Catalogue* is probably not typical of how the series will continue. Pingree is able to refer to his *Census* and other works for most of the biographical and bibliographical information one expects in a descriptive catalogue, and as a result his manuscript articles are very concise. Each manuscript is treated firmly as an exemplar of the text. Thus, main entries are for works, not for manuscripts, which leads to several odd cross-references in cases where commentaries occupy the same manuscript as the work commented upon, yet have separate main entries.

Pingree has given extremely full information on the scribes, their families and dates, and other historical and geographical facts given in the colophons. Sanskrit astral manuscripts are known for having abundant marginal jottings, sometimes amounting to short works, and Pingree has transcribed and sometimes identified all this incidental and marginal material, a very difficult task. His division of the topics into astronomy, mathematics, divination, genethlialogy, *muhūrta* (catarchic astrology), *praśna* (interrogations), encyclopaedias, dictionaries and other miscellaneous fragments and works is an improvement on the traditional, but much less clear, threefold division of the Indian astral sciences. In his introduction he picks out several manuscripts of special note, and suggests that the Benares pandit was not a practising astronomer, since the collection is poor in such practical aids as planetary tables. The combination of philological, palaeographical and mathematical skills necessary to produce this catalogue should not be underestimated.

The physical descriptions of the manuscripts are minimal and one misses, perhaps, an appreciation of the manuscripts as antiquities in their own right. This is defended in the editor's foreword, on the grounds that such "extra details" are unlikely to contribute to a future codicology of Sanskrit manuscripts. Several Chandra Shum Shere manuscripts have watermarks, and information on the chain and laid lines, paper types and inks can all be of importance for conservationists and historians of paper technology. The fact that this information is not recorded detracts from the catalogue's usefulness. Another drawback is that Gambier-Parry's careful and consistent foliation has been ignored, reference being in all cases only to the original and commonly corrupt foliation of the scribes. The principle of referring to the most recent system of foliation, which usually best reflects the present state of a manuscript, would greatly facilitate finding one's way.

The accuracy of the extremely complicated typesetting is commendable, but compared to the Bodleian's previous catalogues of Sanskrit manuscripts, the layout of this volume leaves something to be desired. Until recently, expense would have justly precluded the use of Oriental scripts, but the Oxford University Computing Centre now offers a cheap and excellent laser typesetting service for Devanāgarī, and it seems a pity that advantage was not taken of this new technology. The use of bold type and centralization for titles, a little more space between entries, and page headers giving the manuscript numbers, would have made all the difference to a book that is very hard on the eye.

That a collection of 6,600 manuscripts could lie virtually unknown for fifty years in a major British university library is astonishing, and testifies to an intervening lack of that very enthusiasm which procured the collection in the first place. Jonathan Katz is to be congratulated on initiating the publication of this catalogue.

Harvester Microform has recently embarked on a series of major microfilm collections under the umbrella title *Britain's Literary Heritage*. The series is planned to include material of all ages, but the first set is devoted to an extensive selection (over 180 volumes in all) of medieval literary manuscripts from Cambridge University Library; the brief guide in hard copy that accompanies the collection includes appropriate descriptions of those manuscripts in the Additional series that were not included in the printed catalogue of the Library's manuscripts in the nineteenth century. Later selections will cover literary manuscripts from the British Library and the Virginia Woolf papers at the University of Sussex.

In the Ruskin archive

Continued from page 578

that one is not such a person, and I had some good times in When-I company, finding friends who were – in a phrase they often use – "the salt of the earth".

Some others, clinging to the politics of a previous generation, over-fond of gossip, snobbish connoisseurs of social class, reminded me of the expatriate colony of English Tories Ruskin knew in Rome in the early 1840s. Here he met Joseph Severn, Keats's friend (who was to be Joan's father-in-law), and was introduced to other men whose opinions of the world had been formed in the first two decades of the century. Ruskin's diary of the period is rather stiff, and since he was travelling with his parents he wrote few letters. But at Bembridge one may read the effusive journal kept by Mary Richardson, another cousin, who was in the Ruskin party: she describes the social setting of this important part of Ruskin's aesthetic education. There are other fascinating diaries at Bembridge. The first of them is that kept by Ruskin's father, John James. This, together with his account books, reveals a pattern of hospitality and charity that, I believe, was re-created and magnified in his son's Guild of St George, whose utopian operations were much influenced by Ruskin's memories of early family life in Herne Hill. Another diary worth noting is George Butterworth's. He was a Lancashire carpenter who attended Ruskin's drawing classes at the Working Men's College and did odd jobs for him. Ruskin suspected that Butterworth was less interested in drawing than in working men's clubs. The journal tends to support this judgement. It therefore gives a refreshing picture of the attempts to educate artisans in the 1850s: most reminiscences of such experiments were written by toadies.

Thinking of Butterworth, and indeed of Whitehouse himself, one is led to the question of Ruskin's effect on his followers. Ruskinians have always been divided between those who claim that his influence was wide and those who believe it to have been negligible. In the Bembridge collections it is possible to see how this first became a problem. Ruskin's Oxford "disciples", recruited in the 1870s, seem often to have become self-effacing, scholarly men, not interested in the world's rewards. It was the talk of the members of the Guild of St George (who were scarcely ever of the Oxford group) to fight St George's battles in the world: but they were often simply bewildered by Ruskin's instructions. The Ruskin Societies, founded in a number of provincial cities in the 1880s, were not controlled by Ruskin himself, and he had no part in their programmes. Their initial purpose seems to have been to lend or exchange his rare and expensive books, or to keep track of his fugitive pamphlet publications. But they soon turned to the study of George Eliot, or women's suffrage, or other modernisms: Ruskin would have disapproved of this. Thus the organizations formed to study him took to the discussion of generally progressive causes, and at a time, just after 1885, when the first cheap editions of his work came into circulation. Here was an area in which inspirations and aspirations could be splendidly confused. I suspect that this was so of Whitehouse. All museum collections are to some extent the product of circumstances, and the Bembridge archive has an odd history. It none the less affords rich insights into the way that a high Victorian writer became part of the consciousness of early-modern Britain.

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